

Listening Script

Cleaned from Zoom transcript with timestamps removed, filler reduced, and speaker changes preserved for multi-voice narration.

Chapter 1

[Donald Washington]

It is now 6:30 sharp. We're gonna get this thing going, My co-host, Nichelle Bowden, if you can still allow people to come in as I'm speaking, because I'm not, somewhat paying attention anymore to the ones coming in. I appreciate that. So, my name is, Donald Washington. I am the coordinator of the Natty Dems. and today we want to throw this forum to, get the people, voices out there who want to be the leadership of the party. so I would like to congratulate all of you who won your PE spots. congratulations to everyone. it's really a big deal. I'm happy to see everybody wanting to be a part of the democratic process. and for the ones who didn't win, I'm glad that you're still here, being a part of this process, because we still need your voices. So, congratulations, everyone, and the ones who didn't, you're still a part of this thing. So, to, get this meeting moving on, I would like to introduce myself as I did. My name is Donna Washington. I'm the coordinators of the Natty Dems. I have my co-host, which is Nichelle Bowden. she's a co-host today. And I also have my timekeeper, which is Latour Jackson. And All of you guys received the rules to be a candidate, and we're glad that you're here, by the way. Sorry. And she's going to follow those rules, so you will get cut off once your time is up. Yeah, so we're going to go ahead and get started. First. I will actually, here's what I'm gonna do first. if you are a candidate, I would like to pin your name to the top so it's easier for me to find, when we're asking the questions. So, if you're a candidate, please raise your hand right now. If you let me let me reiterate something, then. If you are a candidate that, that, responded to our, invitation, raise your hand, because we, we've set this for 10 candidates. And it looks like I'm getting more than that. Second. Preston Jones. Begin. Cook. Eric Cook, I'm not seeing your, your reservation for candidate seat. I think that is it. If I did not pin you Okay. Stephon Pryor, I did not see your reservation for candidacy. This is not for the CDC, by the way. This is for the county. Okay, that's 10. Okay. So I'll like to address a email that Natty Dems received from a member of the Democratic Party. In this email, this person said that Natty Dems were, we were hypocrites. And the main two points why she pointed out that we were hypocrites was because in our joint statement with, CPP, she said that we said we are, transparent. And she believed that we calling this forum together in such short notice that that wasn't a part of transparency, and also because we said there would be no questions from everybody in attendance. that that wasn't a part of transparency. So, just to address that, I prepared a statement, and That statement is The Natty Dems put this forum together because that's what our organization voted for as a collective at our last meeting. During that meeting, we as a group realized, due to the

current process of how the Hamilton County leadership is chosen, we had no clue on who was running for these positions and what they stood for. Which is an issue we believe that needs to be addressed as a, as a whole in the party. Which is why this forum was created, and why all leadership and PEs were invited. Addressing the issue of why we elected there be no questions is because we have 10 candidates that elected to take part in this forum, and we invited hundreds of PEs. Time simply doesn't permit questions. of 10 candidates from hundreds of PEs. As the coordinator of Natty Dems, I believe this email was really about Natty Dems was really not about Natty Dems being hypocrites, but more about the fear from those in the party who are used to only a few of us as a whole. Not paying attention to the process. And the 90 Dems representing those days being over. Natty Dems was formed out of transparency, and our number one mission is to continue that spirit and educate the African American community about the voting process and uniting our vote and our voices. So, I hope if the person who had that concern is here can hear us loud and clear, and we can start this process. We We selected names out of the hat for the ones who did, again, reserve their spot for being a candidate. And we're gonna start with the chair position. And the first name we pulled was Alex Linzer. So, with that being said, we're gonna get this started, and you will hear me and, Nikki, Nichelle, go back and forth with these questions. She's my co-host. So, let me get that, those questions, and we will begin. So, something I failed to mention, too, is that Each candidate will be asked a general question that will go to all candidates, and then each candidate will be asked a question, specific to the position that they're running for. So we're gonna start with the, the, the specific questions that, for their specific, seats that they're running for. So this first question is to Alex Linzer. And Leslie Jones, but, he was elected to go first, picked out of the hat. So, this first question.

[LaTora Jackson]

Donald, just a moment. Sorry to interrupt. Based off of our rules, we did include a 30-second introduction in the role that they'll be sitting for before we ask the questions.

[Donald Washington]

Oh, I'm sorry, you're right. I'm sorry, you're right. Yes. Yes, you're right. You're right. I'm sorry about that. So, yes, Alex Linzer, if you can hear me, you can unmute yourself. Let me see.

[LaTora Jackson]

And come off camera if you wish to. I did. I do have him listed as unmuted so he can turn on his audio.

[Donald Washington]

Yes, and come on camera if you miss. Okay. So, you can come off camera if you wish to, and then you can unmute yourself, and you have 30 seconds to introduce yourself and whatever you want in that 30 seconds.

[Alexander Linser]

well, thank you, to our hosts. I actually I'm trying to come off camera, but it's not allowing me to do that, so, I don't I don't want to prolong things, and I'll just keep going with my introduction. but if you guys can figure that out between now and then, that would be super great. First of all, I want to say thank you to everybody who is here tonight, and congratulations to all of you who have won your precinct executive elections. Welcome to the Hamilton County Democratic Party. The task in front of us this year is monumental. It is existential.

[Donald Washington]

Does that mean his 30 seconds was up? Latoura?

[LaTora Jackson]

Sorry, that does mean the 30 seconds is up, so it just should be a 30-second introduction, and then we'll go right into the questions.

[Donald Washington]

Okay, this next is Leslie Jones. Leslie? if you can is she off mute, Latoura? Can she unmute herself? Unmute. That's not me.

[LaTora Jackson]

Yeah, she can unmute herself now.

[Donald Washington]

Are you there, Leslie?

[Lesley Jones]

Okay, yeah, I can unmute myself, but you all have the video disabled. So it won't allow us to take ourselves off to come on camera. I'm Leslie Jones, and I am running for chair of the Hamilton County Democratic Party. I'm a lifelong resident of a lifelong Democrat, a resident of the Mount Airy.

community, I have served, as a precinct exec before. I was an endorsed candidate, for the Democratic, endorsement for Cincinnati City Council in 2017. I am, a faith organizer. community organizer. I have organized around everything from health care to workers rights and currently community safety and against gun violence. I've been a long time.

[Donald Washington]

Okay, next up, we have Rafael Proffitt. And I believe I fixed the camera issue.

[Raffel Prophett]

Okay, good evening, everyone. My name's Rafael Proffitt, lifelong resident of Hamilton County with deep roots in our community and a strong commitment to democratic values. I understand the challenges our communities face because I've spent my life working alongside people we serve with experience running for political office. And a professional background in personal and professional development. I know how to identify, mentor, and prepare strong candidates to lead and win. I'm ready to serve as vice president chair for candidate development, and I hope I can get your support.

[Donald Washington]

There we have it. Next we have, Bonnie Dunkelman.

[Bonnie Dunkelman]

Hi, I'm Bonnie Dunkelman. I currently serve, all of you, Democrats of Hamilton County, as the Hamilton County Democratic Party Vice Chair for Membership and Volunteer Engagement. I am running for re-election so that I continue, serving everybody. The work the work has been great, a lot of accomplishments, but there's more to be done, and I would like to do that.

[Donald Washington]

Next we have Nikita Anderson. You can see.

[Nikita Anderson]

Good evening. I am Nikita Anderson, and I am. Oh, hey there. Good evening, I'm Nikita Anderson, and I am running for one County Democratic Party. I am a lifelong native of Cincinnati, a lifelong advocate for the people, and I am ready to collaborate and turn Ohio blue for this November. And I'm excited to share my ideas with you all and hopefully get your support.

[Donald Washington]

All right. next we have Stephanie Hawk.

[Stefanie Hawk]

Okay, hi, I'm Stephanie Hawk. I'm the president of Shibby at City Council and should be a district chair. I've been involved in the party since 2019 and just looking to get, you know, this is the next step in being involved locally. And I just really want to, I'm running for vice chair communications. And really just want to be able to help out and see what I can do to help our communications as part of being better.

[Donald Washington]

Nice. Next, we have Teresa Harper Kodashik. Sorry if I messed that up.

[Theresa Harper Kolodzik]

Trying to get my camera on. Sorry, can't open it up.

[Donald Washington]

There you go.

[Theresa Harper Kolodzik]

Okay. Hi, I'm Teresa Harper Kolodzik. I'm running for Vice Chair of Volunteer Membership and Volunteer Engagement.

[Donald Washington]

Catholic, okay.

[Theresa Harper Kolodzik]

I am currently the district chair of the Corain Township. Besides that, I've ran for trustee twice. My professional background includes auditing, writing best practices and operational policies and procedures so that companies can achieve their stated goals. I also write year-round get-out-to-vote plans for not just my local church.

[Donald Washington]

Next we have — you've been muted. Next we have Jim Ryan.

[Jim Ryan]

I'm Jim Ryan, and I am running to replace Chuck Johnson as the vice chair for candidate recruitment. I've been a Democrat all my life. I am currently the president of the Madeira Democrats, and proud to say that at the last election, every precinct in Madeira. voted Democratic, and that spent a long time coming and a lot of work. I've emailed or talked with most of you, and thank you for that, and I'll stop now.

[Donald Washington]

All right. Up next is Britt Barn.

[Britt Born]

Here we go. Well, first, thanks for putting this forum together. I do hope that it can become the standard for our internal elections. So congrats, very cool. My name is Britt Bourne. I'm running for reelection as your secretary. I have served as secretary for 15 plus years. I am an attorney by day. I am currently the court administrator for the Hamilton County Juvenile Court. I live in Silverton, where I'm also a council member, and I live with my husband, foster son, two dogs, and a cat.

[Donald Washington]

All right. And last but not least, we have Benjamin Snyder.

[Benjamin Schneider]

Hi, everyone. My name is Dr. Benjamin Schneider. I'm a clinical pharmacologist during the day, and I am pretty much a full-time activist when I have time. My main rights that I usually campaign for are. police justice, or, I should say criminal justice, housing opportunity, as well as, women's rights. So thank you so much for inviting me.

[Donald Washington]

Here we have it. Thank you to all the candidates. takes real courage to lead a party, so we really appreciate it, and best of luck to all of you. So, we're gonna get to questions. Going, Jasmine Cook.

Jasmine, we did not have your, Reservation as participating. so we're gonna get this going, and the first question will go to Alex. And let me get that option.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Donald, you're muted.

[LaTora Jackson]

Donald, I think you're muted.

[Donald Washington]

I'm sorry, can you guys hear me? Okay, okay, sorry. This is to Alex for chair. S chair. What are your strategies and plans to first address and collaboratively develop actionable and meaningful solutions to mend the division in the local Democratic Party, and second, ensure that all communities are equitably represented. an endorsement process, and all other functions of Democratic leadership decisions.

[Alexander Linser]

Yeah, thank you for the question. Real quick, how much time do I have?

[Donald Washington]

You have two minutes.

[Alexander Linser]

Okay, so as chair, I've been chair for a year, and one of my first priorities was addressing some of the disparities in the decision-making committees that make up the Democratic Party. So, I have had the chance to appoint 32 people to our executive committee. Of those, 23 people were Black people, because I saw that right away, we had a disparity there. I also reconstituted our judicial committee, because I felt like that committee wasn't diverse enough, and we needed different voices. And I think if you look at the slate of candidates that we put forward for judge this year, you'll see that that had a direct impact on the type of people who were able to come through that process and get the party's nomination. I think the biggest thing for a chair is the chair has to create. an environment for group decision making where all voices are present at the table. One of the things that's really great about all these new people who are running for precinct executive is now we have more people to draw on as we fill out these important committees, and the representation on those committees matter,

because I'm. I'm humble enough to understand that I'm not going to see every perspective, and I need to hear it from multiple voices.

[Donald Washington]

Alright, Urban Leslie Jones, do you need me to repeat the question? I'm guessing you do, it's pretty long. Yeah, okay, one second. As chair, what are your strategies and plans to first address and collaboratively develop actionable and meaningful solutions to mend the division in the local Democratic Party? And second, ensure that all communities are equitably accessible. represented in the endorsement process and all other functions of Democratic leadership decisions.

[Lesley Jones]

Thank you again for the question and, you know, repeating that for me. Number one, I believe that in order to bring everyone together, you have to be a collaborative person and build relationships, extend those relationships across. the various, not only the various Democratic clubs, but there's lots of other people that are often left out. And I think as someone who's been really in the trenches, grassroots organizer, that one of the ways to do that. is to make them feel a part of the party. And I think that in order to do that, that means we have to change our fundraising structure. Rather than have a few, you know, wealthy donors that donate, is that we create a more progressive-looking. you know, and progressive way for people to give, to be involved, because people do talk with their money as well. And so, people who can only give the \$5 and \$10 and \$20 donations oftentimes don't feel a part of the party because they can't come to the big parties, to the big events, to the galas, to those. And I think we have to get at the grassroots level and begin to talk with people there. I think that also I've worked extensively with many, many candidates across the board. And I think listening to our candidates, candidates who are saying right now it's a lot when candidates are running coordinated campaigns and they're told they have to raise, you know, five, ten, \$12,000 to give to that coordinated campaign. Whereas we as a party leadership, I think, should be figuring out ways that we're actually helping them to raise money, not vice versa. And so listening now, I hear all of those voices. I think that one is to spend time on one-to-ones. with the groups that, individuals that I really think I need to talk to, which are some of our long-time Democrats, long-time people who have, I think, just been going along to get along, rather than really standing up and saying how they really feel.

[Donald Washington]

That was two minutes. You were cut off. I'm sorry. So next, Nikki, you want to take over for the next question?

[Nichelle Bolden]

Absolutely. Thank you very much, and welcome to everyone, and thank you all for taking time to be here. We really appreciate the attendance in such a short turnaround time. The next question is one of our general questions, and the first question, this is for you, Alex. For decades, Black voters have been one of the Democrat Party's most reliable voting blocs. In your view, what tangible obligations does the party have to these communities in return? And how would the Hamilton County Democrat Party measure how it is truly delivering results for African American residents.

[Alexander Linser]

Well, thank you for that question. I do want to address something my opponent just said. Most of our donations do come from small-dollar donors. There are very few people who write five-figure checks to this Democratic Party, and most of the people who write big checks to the party are labor unions. There is a narrative out there that this party raises money from corporate sources or things like that. It is just simply not the case. Most of our money comes from folks like you who give monthly or candidates who raise into the party. With regard to how we hold the Democratic Party accountable to one of our most important constituencies, which is Black voters, I think look, sometimes we have to bear the consequences of decisions that get made over our head, and we can't let that be an excuse here as a local party. The Democratic Party has taken its base for granted. And we need to go back to the grassroots and we need to go back to talk to the folks in our communities about what they need from their elected officials. We have to be the change that sparks a national movement for how the Democratic Party reignites its base voters. We do that by bringing more people into the table, by increasing representation on the key committees that the party uses to elect or to nominate candidates. At the end of the day, what the party does is nominate candidates and wins elections. So everything we do from the point where we are interviewing candidates to nominating them, voting on them, and then the strategies we use in campaigns have to be designed around integrating with our base. And I will just say, in the last in the 2025 election, I challenged our team. We need to talk to those voters who we have not been talking to. We need to give them a reason to come out and vote for Democrats. We put together a different somewhat campaign where we focused on voters who have voted Democrat in the past, but have not shown up consistently, and most of them were in Black neighborhoods. And we said, we're going to talk to those people, we're going to go on the ground, we're going to hit them. In restaurants, we're gonna hit them into churches where you're gonna make sure that we engage with them and we increase turnout among those voters by 15%. So the strategy did work, but there's a ton more work to do.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Thank you, Alex. Leslie, hi, how are you? I will repeat the question for you. For decades, Black voters have been the one of the Democrat Party's most reliable voting blocs. In your view, what tangible obligations does the party have to Hamilton, the communities, and in return in return? And how

should Hamilton County would Hamilton County Democrat Party, excuse me, measure whether it is truly delivering these results for Black residents?

[Lesley Jones]

Great. And I'd like to applaud my opponent in his openness to acknowledge that the Democratic Party has taken the Black vote for granted. I think that is the one place to start, is the party has to admit. that it has taken the vote for granted, and I applaud the efforts that have happened. I would build on those efforts because I believe that, number one, we need to be not just an election machine, but we need to be an organizing machine, and we need to be organizing year-round. people may come out to vote in a primary or general election, but they pay attention all year round. And when they don't feel, you know, that they've had their voice heard and be a part. So one of the things is I would also strategize with our candidates and those who are elected, not to just show up in Black communities. and low-income communities when it's time for the vote. I would push candidates to put money early into their campaigns, and from the party, putting money into campaigns early that goes into particularly black neighborhoods and into black. programming and marketing because they always come late to the party. I have been a candidate. I know how that has worked. And I know who we employ. I would also, you know, look at who are those trusted messengers. Why don't we see more Black consultants being hired by our party? We have some great candidates. They need to be, you know, also able to talk and to share with the people. And we take them into these communities. and so I believe that, you know, my strategy is year-round. It's not just when it's time for the election, but that we're building, and we're building in our neighborhoods, we're building again, back to, you know, the old block by block, you know, sort of organizing and making sure that everybody on the block. We have also had too many precinct execs for too long that have had the title of precinct exec.

[LaTora Jackson]

I just have to let everyone I am messaging everyone when there is a minute remaining, so I feel like I'm being rough, but I promise I'm letting everyone know. Still check your chats if you're speaking. I am giving you the one minute, and I'll try to give you the five-second countdown, because you'll have five seconds left. Okay.

[Donald Washington]

All right.

[LaTora Jackson]

Just ping me, Leslie. I see your hands going.

[Donald Washington]

Okay, moving right along to our second question. and this question is for the vice chair candidates. a vice chair candidate, chair of candidate development, I'm sorry. As Vice Chair of Candidate Development, what are your strategies to equitably vet potential candidates who represent core values of the Democratic Party and ensure that multiple communities are equitably represented? in the endorsement process of the Democratic leadership decisions. So — no, no, I'm sorry. That was the first one to the — no, that was Vice Chair. I'm sorry, yeah. So we start with Rafael.

[Nichelle Bolden]

I believe that we're asking the people who's voting for, what are the positions that they're running for? For example, I know that Ms. Dunkelman slated that she was already a candidate.

[Donald Washington]

Yep.

[Nichelle Bolden]

the vice chair of, what is that? I'm sorry, volunteers. Correct. Okay, so I know we have the order, but Rafael, what are you, what did you declare as vice, you're running for vice chair, but what specifically?

[Raffel Prophett]

Candidate, candidate development.

[Donald Washington]

Yep.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Okay, candidate development. Okay, so that question would be.

[Donald Washington]

So you want me to repeat that question?

[Raffel Prophett]

Yeah, sure.

[Donald Washington]

All right, I'll repeat that question. All right. As Vice Chair of Candidate Development, what are your strategies to equitably vet potential candidates who represent core values of the Democratic Party and ensure that multiple communities are equitably represented in the endorsement process of the Democrat leadership decisions?

[Raffel Prophet]

Yeah, so, you know, the strategy, has to be that we have to recruit. we have to train, and then we have to have to support and build a long-term plan. You know, far too often, we don't go out and ask, especially in our community, especially in those underserved communities, asking people to serve, people who are connected in those communities. That's what I would do as the vice chair of community or candidate development. Go out to those communities and recruit. There are people actively involved in those communities. And then once we see what their interests are, now we have to basically train and mentor them, show them how to actually get involved in the democratic process, how to run campaigns, how to meetings, how to get out and talk to people. and then after that, we have to build a long-term, a long-term plan on how we build a pipeline. to actually have these candidates live up to the Democratic values. All too often, what we do as a party, and I've heard it from the leadership, the current leadership of the party, we're concerned about just getting Democratic votes, voted to office, but not holding them accountable. So we have to be very deliberate in those people. We can, recruit in those varying communities that we expect them to hold up to the big ten of the core values of the Democratic values in terms of all of these things. We know economic fairness, civil rights. housing, all of these things that we know that they're gonna go out and actually accomplish those things. I think we need to have a change in mindset of the Democratic Party. We know in this county that an endorsement is the golden fleece. If you're endorsed by the Democratic Party in Hamilton County, especially the city. chances are that you're going to win. And so as a party, we must hold these endorsed candidates accountable to living and accomplishing those democratic values and changing and impacting people's lives.

[Donald Washington]

Okay. And who was my next person running for chair for candidate development? Benjamin. And is that it, Canada Development? Is it Benjamin? Stephanie?

[Benjamin Schneider]

I'm sorry, I'm running for secretary.

[Donald Washington]

Oh, okay. So who was the candidate in development? Raise your hand.

[Stefanie Hawk]

It's Jim Beroyan. He doesn't have his camera on.

[Donald Washington]

Oh, okay. So, Jim Ryan, this is to you. I'll repeat the question. As Vice Chair of Candidate Development. What are your strategy plans or what are your strategies to equitably vet potential candidates who represent core values of the Democratic Party and ensure that multiple communities are equitably represented in the endorsement processes of the Democratic leadership? decisions.

[Jim Ryan]

So, I have, permitted to meet with each of the ward and district chairs to get to know what's going on in that individual ward or that individual district. what their needs are, and who the people that they know are active in the party, so that. I can get to know them and recruit those people. The other thing that I think is important, given that we now have one-party rule for all practical purposes in Hamilton County. Is that our endorsement process needs to be. More open. The state of Ohio Democratic Party has gone to only endorsing in what they call extreme circumstances. We had a Secretary of State primary that had two good Democrats running. The state party stayed out of it. We had an Attorney General. Situation where one of the candidates, most of us would say was clearly not. going to be a good candidate, and they went ahead and endorsed in that situation. What I'd like to see us do is have a endorsement process that says that a person is either qualified or unqualified. And if we have 3 candidates running for 1 position, and they're all 3 qualified. The nominating committee should say that and let the voters decide.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you, Jim.

[Nichelle Bolden]

I believe Nikita is running also for,

[Donald Washington]

Nikita, are you Candidate Development? Yes, okay, let me read you that question. As Vice Chair of Canada Development. What are your strategies to equitably vet potential candidates who represent core values of the Democratic Party and ensure that multiple communities are equitably represented in the endorsement processes of the Democratic leadership decisions? Katie, you're still on mute. I gave you permission to unmute. You should be able to. And now you're It's like you have a bad connection. Okay, yes, go ahead.

[Nikita Anderson]

Okay, can you hear me now? I just want to state that I'm interested. Can you hear me?

[Donald Washington]

Yes.

[Nikita Anderson]

Okay, so I just want to state that I am interested in candidate recruitment and development as well as engagement and membership. And so for recruitment and development, my guiding principles would be integrity and accountability, representation and inclusion. community-rooted leadership, and sustainable infrastructure. And so in order to do that, we would need to build out a strong and diverse candidate pipeline. And so we need to hit places that I heard the other two talk about, but in the community, asking people who are interested, who want to be the change that they want to see, like myself. which is why I got involved and I'm now active. And then we also want to develop a high quality candidate training program. And so I've already outlined trainings that we can start implementing with candidates or just community members in general who are interested in getting involved. and want to learn more about how the city operates and the county operates, and what the party actually can do to support members. I want to tap on what Pastor Leslie Jones said before about. building up infrastructure that allows the party to support the candidate and not so much the candidate supporting the party. And so we have to strengthen the collaboration across our party structures. And so we're looking at creating pipelines through the ward chairs and the precinct executives. but also community partners and other organizations that are doing the work, like YMCA, the Urban League, and even Public Allies, which I'm an alum of, and it's gave me a lot of insight onto how to really do this work. the right way. And so when we look at like breaking that down. That's candidate, identification, outreach and engagement, and making sure that you're meeting people where they are and so not accommodating ourselves or the party, but accommodating the people that we can lift up and empower to be candidates. that are going to be the candidates that voters

want to see. And so, like I said, you want to make sure you're developing that core training and curriculum, and you want that to be based on integrity-based

[Donald Washington]

Thank you. Nikita, you've been muted. Time's up.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Okay, so I'll jump in and follow up with questions for our vice chair candidates for volunteers and I believe member recruiting. the first question the question first goes to you, Ms. Dunkelman, Ms. Bonnie Dunkelman. connecting and collaborating with precinct executives, particularly the precinct newly elected precinct executives, community organizations, and even college and high school students. is definitely necessary to develop a strong and diverse base of volunteers. As vice chair of this particular committee, what are your plans to intentionally develop and organize a cross-section of volunteers and also recruit new voices?

[Bonnie Dunkelman]

Okay, excellent question, thank you. I'll, work very closely with both, College Dems and the Young Dems organization. I attend their meetings and events when possible. I have, I donate to them. I've donated to both organizations in the last month, actually. Because I agree that the the young people are their future and we must. we absolutely must prepare them to, to be the leaders of tomorrow. I really I get everywhere. I am a very well-caffeinated person. I meet with a lot of people, to find out. one on one, what works in their community, how I can help them. I have helped many people start dem clubs. I have helped them open bank accounts. I've helped them start packs if they want to start a pack so that they can support the candidates in their neighborhood. but the most important thing that I think that I have learned over the years of, of recruiting volunteers is that different strategies are necessary in different communities and in different neighborhoods. What works in the suburbs isn't going to necessarily work in the city. And so it's very important to have a well-rounded group of people so that we always have somebody that looks like the people we want to talk to, and that we want to recruit, and that we want to, Rise up where we want to help them get the strategies that they need to be successful. I can't see my timekeeper anymore. Am I okay? Okay.

[Nichelle Bolden]

You said you're good. You're good. Thank you so much.

[LaTora Jackson]

You're good. You had 20 seconds left.

[Nichelle Bolden]

You were good.

[Bonnie Dunkelman]

Okay.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Good job, good job.

[Bonnie Dunkelman]

I yield my 20 seconds.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Okay, thank you so much. We appreciate that. Same question, Teresa, Ms. Kolodzik, did I say that correct? No, I did not. I'm so sorry.

[Theresa Harper Kolodzik]

That's okay. It's Theresa Harper Kolodzik.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Kolodziej. Okay, thank you so much. I will reread the question for you as well.

[Theresa Harper Kolodzik]

Okay.

[Nichelle Bolden]

my phone just went dark. Okay. So, as, we were stating, connect obviously connecting and collaborating with precinct executives, particularly the newly exe newly, elected executives, community organizers, and college students, and even high school students. is necessary to develop a

strong and diverse base of volunteers. As Vice Chair of Volunteers and Membership, what are your plans to intentionally develop and organize a cross-section of volunteers, as well as recruit new voices?

[Theresa Harper Kolodzik]

Well, it's ongoing. That's what I do right now. As a district chair, I outreach to find additional PEs within the community. So I encouraged everybody to run, not just within Corain, but across the district, city and the county. I recruited over 20 people to actually run. And on an ongoing basis, I'm in the community. I'm a grassroots organizer. So I connect with community leaders that are already meeting. In every section of Hamilton County, they have neighborhood clubs. So I'm actively involved and engaged in those organizations as well. I actually have a civic engagement training, that and voter education training that we implement across the churches within the AME churches. I write voter engagement and voter, civic engagement programs, plans for the entire third district AME church. I'm part of the committee planning to do that. So in that planning is civic engagement and voter education. Within church, we have the young people, that actually do the weekly announcements around getting out the vote and civic engagement. So every single week we'll have something called the social justice moment. So they're prerecorded videos, by young people from the ages of 13 all the way up through college. So we're actively doing that. And it's very effective because at the same time, they're learning about civic engagement and that their responsibility goes beyond, just voting, before they're able to vote. That not only engages them, it also engages their parents and grandparents as well. In terms of getting training for PEs, there's so much more that we can do. the definition of PE has always

[Donald Washington]

Thank you, Teresa. Now, that was a collaborative change of fundraiser, communications. So next we'll have the Vice Chair for Communications. Vice Chair of Communications. So, as the Vice Chair of Communications. What are your plans to enhance communication strategies and outreach campaigns designed to engage and increase the number of Dems and independent voters throughout the county, specifically in the overlooked communities? So, if you were running for that position, you wanna raise your hand? Okay, Stephanie Hall. Oh, you and Nikita. Okay, well, Nikita was first out of the hat, so we'll let you go, Nikita.

[LaTora Jackson]

You said we're going with Nikita?

[Donald Washington]

Yeah, she was the first out of the hat, and she's running for this, yeah.

[LaTora Jackson]

Nikita, you're able to unmute yourself.

[Donald Washington]

She should be, I hit the button.

[LaTora Jackson]

Yeah, I'm hitting it for it, too.

[Donald Washington]

Can't hear you, Nikita. If you think you're unmuted, you're. For the sake of time, Nikita, I'm gonna go to Stephanie, and then maybe you can get that problem good, okay? Okay, there you go. There you go. Go ahead. Stephanie, there you go.

[Stefanie Hawk]

Should I go or Nikita?

[Donald Washington]

Nikita, let her go. She's on mute.

[Nikita Anderson]

And yeah, okay. I was trying to get your attention for the last Yeah, I'm sorry, I was trying to get your attention for the last position for engagement. I was also so, from my understanding, the vice chairs are just running, and then they're selected on who's gonna run each, so I have skills in more than one space, so if I could answer the previous question, as well as the communications question.

[Donald Washington]

The previous question so you're running for 3 different spots?

[Nikita Anderson]

for engagement. Yes, for engagement.

[Donald Washington]

Okay,

[Nikita Anderson]

If that's Fine.

[Nichelle Bolden]

That would have been for the volunteer position engagement. So

[Nikita Anderson]

Yes, the volunteer membership engagement.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Okay, because this is communication, so then Stephanie has already answered the communications question.

[Donald Washington]

No, Stephanie hasn't yet.

[Nichelle Bolden]

She was going to, okay, so let us not interrupt Stephanie because Stephanie was, give her her time back please.

[Donald Washington]

Okay, well, I'll Nikita, I will let you I will allow you to answer both questions, but we'll let Stephanie go ahead, because she is the only one. And I'll ask that question over Stephanie. As the Vice Chair of Communications, what are your plans to enhance communication strategies and outreach campaigns designed to engage and increase the number of Dems and independent voters throughout the county, specifically in the overlooked communities?

[Stefanie Hawk]

Thank you. and just to clarify for Nikita, you actually do run for a specific chair, not just for one of them and get assigned later. but, my, my, goal to run for communications chair, is the reason why I'm running for this is because with my time with the Westside Democratic Club, while I was there, I revamped their website and their newsletter and doing that, we've grown our club and, threefold in the time that I've been with the club, and we've, you know, we're on the really red west side of the county, and we've picked up we're now regularly getting between 80 60 and 80 people per meeting, which is, really somewhat hard to do, and the big reason why we're able to do that is because. You know, we follow up on contacts. That is one of the biggest complaints we've had, is following up on volunteer contacts when we get submissions. Running ads in places that we're making sure people know when we have events. And the biggest thing with communications is listening. Listening to people. So much we want to, we think communications, we want to talk, but so much of it is listening. because people will tell you what they need and, and what, how they want to participate and meeting people where they are. And those are the big things I want to be able to do as well as working with the campaigns. and coordinating, you know, working with a coordinated campaign to be able to spread their message out, and be successful in more areas of the county.

[Donald Washington]

Nice. Okay. Nikita, I'll go back to you. And you said you wanted both those questions. You're running for both of those positions. so What was it, the Communications, and remind me of the other one?

[Nichelle Bolden]

allow me to jump in here. I believe, as Stephanie had said, that it's one position that you need to basically choose, if I'm not mistaken. Is that

[Nikita Anderson]

I'm able. That.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Because we want to be in accordance with what the process Alex, can you please answer that? Because he just raised his hand.

[Alexander Linser]

Yeah, so, the to demystify this process a little bit, there are four vice chair positions in the bylaws. The bylaws do not specify, Who is assigned to which, sort of subcommittee. But the only requirement of the vice chair positions is that two of them must identify as male and two of them must identify as female. So currently the incumbent for communications is Ann Sessler. She is not running for reelection. So we will elect four new vice chairs on Saturday. After that election, the vice chairs will all get together with the chair and the first vice chair and they will decide who's gonna be in what lane. So it's perfectly fine for anybody running for any of these offices to tell you I've got a skill set in this and I wanna pursue that lane. but it's not decided at the organizational meeting, it's decided after the officers are elected.

[Donald Washington]

So, with that being said, Nikita, we heard from you, and we will hear from you again, so, but, but

[Nikita Anderson]

Can I still answer?

[Donald Washington]

Go ahead.

[Nikita Anderson]

Okay, so I won't be able to I can answer both questions in 2 minutes. just to speak on my skill sets in both areas, and my ability to be able to do either role, if I'm elected, in that vice chair position.

[Donald Washington]

Okay, go, go ahead, go ahead. I, I, I will make this, go ahead, go ahead.

[Nikita Anderson]

And I'll keep it at 2 minutes for both. And so, for community engagement and membership, and even, talking communications, I have spent time with Cohere as an organizer, and before that, I was a public ally, and before that, I was the program coordinator at Gabriel's Place, and under. just under my leadership as the program coordinator at Gabriel's Place, I was able to take our program in Avondale that saw mostly out-of-neighborhood volunteers to. predominantly all-Black neighborhood volunteers, with still bringing in some of those groups, and so I have over a decade of experience and engagement and being able to communicate. I mean, even looking at the work that I did most

recently in this past cycle with the Cincy Precinct Project, I worked with over 100 candidates. I was responsible for creating a lot of the. the digital media, social media stuff that you saw. I ran a lot of our social media. so I've I've recruited for Public Allies, and, like, all of our I want to say this past class. everybody that was recruited are still, actively in the program and going hard. So, like, I have experience with making sure that I'm picking the quality, candidates or members to do work. I've been a volunteer manager in several different roles, with seven different organizations. Paid and unpaid, like I said, for over the last 10 years. So getting volunteers out, getting diverse volunteers has never been a problem. If you know me from my organizing work, you know that I can literally talk to anyone. And so if you're familiar with Cohere. And being a bridge builder, those bridge builders span just not in the greater Cincinnati area, but northern Kentucky and even out in the suburbs. And so I know we hear a lot about, can you be impactful in the county as well as the city? I think the city is a given. But with my personality and my skills, I could definitely bridge those gaps between the county as well. I'm not scared to talk to anyone. I'm not afraid to go places that may not be the norm for me. When we think about.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you, Nikita. Okay, so moving right along, two candidates that we haven't heard from yet, if you haven't got to them, was, Britt Bourne and Benjamin Snyder. so I'm gonna go to those questions for the secretary's position.

Chapter 2

[Nichelle Bolden]

And those are in the email. I was gonna go ahead and read.

[Donald Washington]

Okay, you can go ahead. Go ahead and take it.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Okay, okay, thank you. Okay, so We will go with Britt first. Thank you for attending, Britt. Question for Secretary. there have been some expressed concerns about providing timely, transparent, and equitable communication with regard to meeting notes and dates and times and other matters concerning the Democratic Party, in terms of its accessibility, as far as the people being able to readily. access the information. So, as the secretary moving forth, what is your strategy to address these concerns and plans of execution?

[Britt Born]

Yeah, so, you know, I, so great question. I think that the secretary position is certainly one that can move into this century. It has been handled in a somewhat, not somewhat, pretty archaic way, all the way dating back to, you know, I have been the secretary. I was the secretary under Tim Burke, and I was the secretary under Gwen McFarlane, and now the secretary under Alex. I have largely taken the lead on, or taken the lead of the chairperson, whatever somewhat their preference is on how. how we are, disseminating information. the notices for meetings have never come from the party secretary. that is something that we can certainly talk about. changing. But historically, those have come from the executive director of the party. So historically, my particular role has been to take the meeting minutes, and I have meeting minutes on this very computer, dating back every meeting back to I don't know, like 2011, 2012, maybe before that. and then just making sure that the, the executive director and the chairperson have access to that. Those are all things that can be updated. So, in my opinion, how we're taking the minutes, how we're disseminating them. you know, what how are they getting posted? Are they getting sent out? meeting notices, if we believe that that should be with the secretary or with the executive director, I think all of those things are open to, I'm open to improvement, and I'm happy to do it however the chair and the party would like it to be done.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Thank you. Thank you very much. Ben, Ben Schneider. Hi, how are you? Good, okay. I'll ask you the same question. There have been expressed concerns about providing timely, transparent, and equitable communication with regard to meeting notes, meeting dates and times, and other matters concerning the Democratic Party. as I previously stated, as the Secretary, what would be your strategy to address these concerns, and also your plans for execution?

[Benjamin Schneider]

Yeah, so just to go back to my introduction, my PhD is in clinical pharmacology, so I definitely have the background and training to write notes. I have a decade plus of scientific manuscripts, really dozens, including my dissertation. I have a decade of FDA submissions. a number of patents, 7 or 8 years of consulting experience, which is very meeting minutes heavy. I've probably written collectively thousands of pages of scientific documentation in total, and I also run 3 small businesses. So I'm used to keeping notes. I don't really have. any qualms with the the task of it. Because I think it's relatively straightforward. But in terms of getting the information to people, I'm very familiar with this from running small businesses and advocacy. So you have to have a multi tiered strategy for me. communication in order to get meeting minutes in front of people, because the job of a secretary is to keep, you know, an accurate record and communicate it to everyone in the party. And it you really want that contemporaneous with very equitable access. So immediate access can look like. an email of a rough draft, keeping a public database, aggressively reminding people whenever you see them,

whenever you get your chance to communicate. That's really what transparency is about for me. And again, I have deep ties with the party already through a decade plus of activism. So I really feel comfortable that I'll be able to perform the duties of this role well and beyond that. The other reason I'm seeking the secretary position is because I'm a little bit of an old school progressive.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Thank you, Ben. General question, Donald, for the group? Okay.

[Donald Washington]

Yes, yes. Now we're, at the stage of the general question that will be asked to all candidates, and actually, we already asked Alex, and we already asked, Leslie those questions, so, so it'll just be to every other candidate, this, one general question. So, starting with, Rafael. for decades, Black voters have been one of the Democratic Party's most reliable voting blocs. In your view, what tangible obligations does the party have to those communities in return, and how should the Hamilton County Democratic Party measure whether it is truly delivering results for Black residents.

[Raffel Prophett]

I can't unmute.

[Donald Washington]

There you go.

[Raffel Prophett]

Now I can, right, right, so I got distracted, so you're gonna have to repeat that.

[Donald Washington]

For decades, Black voters have been one of the Democratic Party's most reliable voting blocs. In your view, what tangible obligations does the party have to those communities in return, and how should the Hamilton County Democratic Party measure whether that is truly whether it is truly delivering results. for Black residents.

[Raffel Prophett]

Yeah, and I mentioned this before in the first question about in terms of the impact of the Democratic Party on African-American and underserved community. I know that in the city of Cincinnati, 1 in 3, African Americans live in poverty, and it's been that way for the last, 20, 30, 30 to 40 years, quite frankly. And so I think that what we have to do is that we have to, because again, the Democratic endorsement is the golden ticket. And so we as a party, we're going to have to hold our elected officials accountable for making sure that we put policies in place. to uplift, especially African Americans, who have been loyal Democrats for decades, right? Affordable housing, we know that there's an affordable housing crisis, but I have yet to see the party endorse. an issue that will provide for significant affordable housing, or candidates that have enacted policies that have enacted, or that would impact affordable housing. Now, we know that we don't control the state. But we certainly control the county and most definitely the city. And so we're going to have to. as a party. We have to hold those candidates that we give the endorsement, who win, to put policies in that's going to impact African Americans, and the metrics will be, in terms of the number of affordable housing units we create. And also, how many African American families are relieved from poverty? The poverty rate actually goes down among African Americans. Those are the metrics that we have to measure. We have to hold. elected officials accountable. The party has to do a mind shift. We have to do this.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you, Raphael. That same question goes to Bonnie Dunkelman. Let me read the question. For decades, Black voters have been one of the Democratic Party's most reliable voting blocs. In your view, what tangible obligations does the party have to those communities in return? And how should the Hamilton County Democratic Party measure Black voters? whether it is truly delivering results for Black residents.

[Bonnie Dunkelman]

Well, I think the measurement is the easy part because people speak with their vote. And if they don't vote, they are also speaking. So if voter turnout is suppressed in certain communities, I think the assumption could be that perhaps we are not doing enough. to reach the voters in those communities that they want to trust us and our candidates with their vote. So As I answered when I talked about when I was asked about. Volunteer engagement in in different, you know, communities. I think the same applies with voter engagement. And I think we have to figure out. how to better engage with voters. And I do think that people do want to hear from people that look like them. When you want to outreach to the to young voters, you're you are better your best the best plan is to send somebody young. to talk to the young voters. And I think, the, the same thing in, in the different communities. Different. Strategies are necessary for different communities. And We have to figure out, we do have to do a better job of figuring out what the strategy is. in all of our communities.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you, Bonnie. Next we have Nikita. For decades, Black voters have been one of the Democratic Party's most reliable voting blocs. In your view, what tangible obligations does the party have to those communities in return? And how should the Hamilton County Democratic Party measure whether it is truly delivering results? for the Black residents.

[Nikita Anderson]

Thank you for that question. And so I would like to say it's one thing to say we want more voters, more Black voters, a higher voter turnout of Black people. But the real marker is, do we have Black people in leadership? And particularly, do we have Black women in leadership? And not just standing next to leadership, not behind leadership, not supporting leadership, but right there on the front lines in leadership. That is a true marker. If you can say that you see a strong Black leader, and I want to pull away from just saying Black. I want to emphasize progressive as well, because as a true progressive, you're automatically uplifting Black people. You're automatically uplifting the marginalized folk who, are not being heard. And so I'm Black first. You can pull some Facebook clubs. I'm strictly Black first. But in order to uplift everyone, you do that by uplifting Black people. And so if Black leadership, progressive Black leadership is happening, everything will be met. You will see, like I was able to do in my ward, over 100 new voters turn up in the primary. That's due to me door knocking over 100 doors in our precinct, right? Even with overall in Hamilton County, there was a 20% increase in the primary election this year. That was because of Desensi Precinct Project organizing precinct executives to run in neighborhoods that had never been heard before. So I've already demonstrated that I can pull in that diverse leadership because. With the Cincy Precinct Project, we went from about, what, 280, 280 precinct executives positions being filled with a lot of those being elected in or selected in, right, to over 370 being put on the ballot this election. And so. That 20% increase in voter was only because you had 100 new precinct executives running and those precinct executives were knocking doors and they were supported by myself and others in leadership. And so those are the markers.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you, Nikita. Next would be Stephanie Hawk. Let me read you the question. For decades, Black voters have been one of the Democratic Party's most reliable voting blocs. In your view, what tangible obligations does the party have to those communities in return? And how should the Hamilton County Democratic Party measure whether it is truly delivering results for black residents.

[Stefanie Hawk]

Thank you. I think a lot of my response is going to be similar to my previous response, and it's going to be listening. You know, the big thing we can do is listen. Members of the Black community will tell us the issues that are important to them, and it's important for us to hear that and act on it. Not just but

not and not just here, but act on it. and make sure that we, you know, empower the members of that community by bringing them in onto into the committees, and empowering them to be a part of. Making the change, helping select our candidates, helping be a part of it, because if we are not bringing them in to the fold. What is even the point? And, you know, I can sit here and imagine that I'm going to help, but that's not my lived experience. I don't, I can't. I'm a white woman. I don't know. I can't sit here and say that that that I know how to fix everything in that community, but I can listen and I can try to help and I can try to make it better and I can join the fight. And so that's listening is probably I would say the best thing we can do listening and and. Doing what's asked of us.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you, Stephanie. Next, we have Teresa. The question is, for decades, Black voters have been one of the Democratic Party's most reliable voting blocs. In your view, what tangible obligations does the party have to those communities in return? And how should the Hamilton County Democratic Party measure whether it is truly delivering results for the Black residents.

[Theresa Harper Kolodzik]

I'll start out by saying, first, I hope that's the last time we say that statement, that we've we are the base, and we've been overlooked. Everybody knows that. First of all, it has to be intentional. You have to actually go into the locations where there is low voter turnout. The data shows you where people are not coming out. We also have to give them an opportunity to reach out to us. We can do very simple things. For instance, even on the Democratic website. We can have a page where we have community outreach that they can reach us and request them to come to their event to speak, to learn more and to get to know the candidates. And we also have to. tell let every candidate that's running on the Democratic ticket. to commit to going to every location where there are Black voters. They cannot no longer skip those locations. And then on polling on election day, they have to have someone that is at that location, even if they think. They're gonna have one person come out to vote. Plus, we have to give them an opportunity to everybody has to commit to just getting people to run. I made it my goal to actually intentionally recruit people to be PEs. So I did that over the election and so did many other people as well. When the party decides to focus on something, it increases. So if we increase our efforts, getting into those communities, inviting people to participate, the fact is that when people feel engaged. They get involved. You can measure that because the number of volunteers that actually come up. You can measure that because of the number of the PEs that actually start signing up to get involved. You can measure that because of the number of donations that actually come from that.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you, Teresa. The next on the list is Jim Ryan. Here's the question. For decades, Black voters have been one of the Democratic Party's most reliable voting blocs. In your view, what tangible obligations does the party have to those communities in return? And how should the Hamilton County Democratic Party measure whether it is truly delivering results for the Black residents?

[Jim Ryan]

Hey, My belief here is that it's pretty simple to know whether we're truly delivering or not, and that is voter turnout. One of the things that I've seen is we have areas where when voters turn out, they vote Democrat, but they don't turn out very much. And what that tells me is we're not serving that community. Or at least that community doesn't feel like we're serving them. What is the tangible result? That's going to depend. Depending on which part of which black community you're talking about. But Rafael mentioned affordable housing, I think. Did we get affordable housing developed or not is a tangible result that we need to hold ourselves accountable to. as far as how do we go about getting? Increased, communication between the party and. particularly black residents, but also there are other areas where I've dealt with white residents who don't feel like the party's connecting with them. We get our leaders there and not necessarily during election time. as you guys know, I have spoken one-on-one with dozens of you, I have emailed all of you, I have. Talked on the phone or at least left a message for all of you. And. So I'm committed to making sure that we're talking to people year round. And I talked to a elected official who said, I'm going to knock on the doors where I know people are going to turn out if it's close to the election time. And so we got to get those officials in the places where turnout is low. In times when it's not right in front of the election, because I hear over and over again, they only want to talk to us when it's election time. That's my thoughts.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you, Jim. Next, we have Britt Barn. And let me read you that question. For decades, Black voters have been one of the Democratic Party's most reliable voting blocs. In your view, what tangible obligations does the party have to those communities in return? And how should the Hamilton County Democratic Party measure whether it is truly delivering results for the Black residents?

[Britt Born]

Yeah, so great question, like everybody said. So if we're looking solely at seats and at races, Democrats have done a lot of winning in Hamilton County in the last decade, and that deserves some recognition, but that definitely does not tell the whole story. I think we need to be stronger with what our endorsement means, what we expect of our elected officials, and we shouldn't be shy about going in a different direction if we find a better candidate. I have long been concerned, about our unwillingness to go in a different direction once we've endorsed a candidate. They win office and then during their term we determine that perhaps they're underperforming or another candidate emerges

that may serve us better in the future. We have treated it as if an office holder is entitled to that seat from the time they are endorsed, and first elected until they decide to leave, and I believe officeholders are entitled to a seat for the term that they are elected, and it's not a lifetime endorsement. And so then it's the office holder's responsibility to put in the work to earn the endorsement going forward and to earn the vote of the people for any additional term. And it's the party's responsibility, frankly, to have the spine to move on to other candidates when it's necessary, because the public deserves frankly the very best that we can put forward. That would also ensure that our elected officials don't become stale or complacent, that they continue to do their very best work for the people. It encourages newer, younger candidates to emerge. And then the community is more energized and more engaged, and then turnout increases, and it's cyclical.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you, Britt. Last but not least Brian? I mean, Benjamin? For decades, Black voters have been one of the Democratic Party's most reliable voting blocs. In your view, what tangible obligations does the party have to those communities in return, and how should the Hamilton County Democratic Party measure whether it is truly delivering results for Black residents?

[Benjamin Schneider]

delivering for those same communities. So to follow up on what Rafael said, there's triple the rate of poverty in black households versus white households in Hamilton County. Poverty, housing, hunger, access to healthcare, material wealth. I mean, pick any material measure of sex. of success, and there are wide disparities between white and black residents of this county. And frankly, I think it's pretty shameful to see these huge material disparities between folks who grew up within 5 miles of each other. So I think representation is incredibly important. But it means next to nothing if there's no material change alongside it. So how do I see myself engendering that change from the secretary role? Well, I want to see leadership throughout the party, and I want to see a change in culture. I want to be part of the engine of the party. that's encouraging that change and giving voice and support to the Black community, when we're having these discussions as a party. And beyond that role, I'd like to contribute to candidate development. this party has stood against so many issues that have been very important for members of the Black community, especially those living in poverty. Such as when they stood against the affordable housing amendment in 2024. And beyond that, we just need some standards in candidate development. You can be a police cheerleader. It's not disqualifying, despite the fact that Dems made a lot of promises during the BLM protests. you can support charter schools, you can be anti-union, you can be pro-finance, you can be pro-war, none of that is disqualifying. So I really think there needs to be a transformation in culture and accountability within the party.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you, Ben. Well, that is the conclusion of this forum. Go ahead.

[Nichelle Bolden]

They have one more, one more, 30 seconds.

[Donald Washington]

Oh yeah, 30 seconds, sorry, yeah.

[Nichelle Bolden]

30 seconds. Your closing statement. Why are we voting for you? Go, Alex.

[Donald Washington]

Yep. All right. Yeah, go Alex.

[Alexander Linser]

Well, thank you all for having me tonight. 30 seconds. Look, the Democratic Party in Hamilton County has been winning for decades. It was not that long ago that we did not have any seats on the Board of County Commissioners. We did not have any countywide offices. We only had five of the nine city council races. Your party chair has to be able to deliver winning campaigns that get Democrats across the finish line. I heard a lot of great ideas tonight. I'm very excited about many of the things that were mentioned. I think we have a lot of growing to do, but at the end of the day, you need a party chair who knows how to run elections. Follow the law and raise the money. And I've proven that I can do that.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you, Alex.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Thank you. Leslie Jones.

[Donald Washington]

I think she has left, if I'm not mistaken. She had to leave at 7.30, if I'm not mistaken. If you're here, you can say something now. I don't think she is, though.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Okay. Okay, Rafael Proffitt, go. 30 seconds, why you?

[Donald Washington]

Okay. Yep. He's on. He's muted. Hold on. Go ahead. You should be able to take a sip of water.

[Raffel Prophett]

Yeah, so, you know, so again, 30 seconds. You know, I'm a Cincinnati, committed. One thing that you can count on me that I'm going to lead courageously, and I think that that's what we need, right? Full transparency. Appreciate Natty Dems for putting this on. I'm part of Natty Dems, part of that leadership. I did not know any of the questions beforehand. So if anybody was worried about that, I did not. But my message has been clear, we have to uplift those communities who are underserved.

[Donald Washington]

Take refill.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Thank you.

[Donald Washington]

Bonnie.

[Bonnie Dunkelman]

Okay. I am not just offering you words. I am offering you real institutional knowledge of what works and what doesn't work. I have experience in performing the task that I am running for. I have done the work of increasing voter engagement and voter turnout in my own community. my own community of Anderson went from very, very red to blue. And I would like to be able to help all communities do that. And it will look differently in different communities, but we'll figure that out together. I just need.

[Donald Washington]

It's 30 seconds. Nikita.

[Nikita Anderson]

So, I think instead of asking questions about how we can bring in Black people and what we need to do to reach Black people, we put Black people in position to lead so that those questions can be answered in demonstration. you could check the resume, you could check the background. I have increased engagement everywhere I've been. Whether it's Public Allies, the Avondale Community Council, Cohere, and even this past election with the turnout in my precinct, I know how to use modernized communication, social media to really bring in. our new generation so that we have that young, innovative insight in our party because that's where we need to go.

[Donald Washington]

30 seconds, Nikita.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Thank you. Stephanie Hawk, 30 seconds, why you?

[Stefanie Hawk]

Hi, yes, I'm running for communications because, you know, communications is the most important thing to me, and also I really want to focus on the areas outside of the city of Cincinnati to make sure that they're getting attention to, that their candidate gets attention to, especially in the municipal election years, because there are so many races. outside the city of Cincinnati that also need attention, and that's somewhat the big thing I want to focus on, because it's a big county, and we all need, resources from the county party.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you, Stephanie.

[Britt Born]

Okay.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Teresa Harper, YU.

[Theresa Harper Kolodzik]

I'm Teresa Harper Kolodzik, and I would like your consideration for your vote for vice chair. I am an organizer, I'm an advocate, and I'm an activist. I'm already doing the work. I would like for us to have a creative culture internally where we welcome new voices and new ideas. I believe that we are stronger and we grow more when we welcome creative solutions. I would love to see our organization have opportunities for people to give their input and to actually help bring out more voters. That increases donations and volunteer and support. I'm asking for your vote.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you. Jim Ryan.

[Jim Ryan]

My background professionally has prepared me for this role because I've been a nonprofit executive, meaning that I had to work with volunteers and raising money. I've been a union member, meaning that I understand the values that our brothers and sisters in labor are involved in. I've been a small business owner and I've been a school teacher, both in public schools and private schools. I've also been very involved in the party for a long time, have been on the state central committee and run in, not run, but campaigned in a lot of. People's election campaigns. I would appreciate your support.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you. Britt Barn.

[Britt Born]

I have contributed above and beyond the basic duties of secretary and used my skills to hopefully move the party forward. I served on the judicial committee for 10 years, chaired it for three of those years, chaired the committee that endorsed Shermaine McGuffey over Jim Neal. chaired the committee that ousted Dusty Rhodes from Hamilton County Democratic Party, and we have 3 precinct executive positions in Silverton, who have historically not done the work, and I have done the work of all 3 of them for our entire village for at least a decade.

[Donald Washington]

Okay. All right. Thank you, Britt.

[Nichelle Bolden]

And Ben Schneider. Go. Why you?

[Benjamin Schneider]

Hi, thank you again. So I'm running for secretary because I think it really fits my background. I think I'm well qualified for the role based on my professional experience. I come from academia and activism. I've been fighting for affordable housing, for women's rights and for police. fighting against police injustice. So I think you would vote for me if you didn't just want someone who was qualified for the role, but also somebody who is a progressive who wanted to lead using their values. I think progressivism is the best way future for forward for our party. I believe it's the best political choice, and I just want to see more leadership, accountability, and higher standards in this party.

[Donald Washington]

Thank you, Ben.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Thank you.

[Donald Washington]

Well, there you have it. I am Donald Washington. I'm the coordinator of the Natty Dems. I want to thank, Nichelle Bowden for being my co-host today, and also Latoura Jackson for being the timekeeper. I want to thank all of the candidates. for coming and, expressing why you should be the candidate and answering all the questions. We really appreciate it. We know it was last minute, but we needed this, and I think that it was a great turnout. I believe at the highest point, we had about 88, 89 people. in the room. So, that's great. We are definitely looking forward to the reorg meeting. And things like this is what you should expect from Natty Dems. We want transparency. We want everybody to have a voice, and we wanna spread that equally. So, thank all of you for coming. Thank you for your patience, and we really appreciate it.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Thank you guys again. Good luck and congratulations to everyone again who won and those who did not. And we still thank you for being part of this journey, part of this movement. And we look forward to having some healthy discussions and collaborations. So again, to reiterate. what, Donald has said.

We really appreciate you, and, this is the standard moving forward, and we have nothing to do but elevate from here with everyone, okay? So have a great evening, and we look forward to talking to you guys and seeing everyone on Saturday.

[Donald Washington]

That's true. Have a good evening.

[Nichelle Bolden]

Thank you. Have a good evening.