

Town Council Candidate Questions

2025 Amherst Town Council and School Committee Racial and Social Justice Candidate Questionnaire

Co-sponsored by



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for Palestine



WESTERN MASS
SHOWING UP FOR
RACIAL JUSTICE

Find the invitation for this candidate questionnaire [here](#).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT:

- 1) Make a copy of this questionnaire (click on “File” in the header bar —> “Make a Copy”)
- 2) Fill out your information in the spaces provided below.
- 3) Fill out the questionnaire. For short-answer questions, please keep your answers to approximately 100 words.
- 4) Email your completed questionnaire to: AmherstCandidateQuestionnaire@gmail.com
- 5) Contact us at AmherstCandidateQuestionnaire@gmail.com with any questions

YOUR INFORMATION (PLEASE FILL IN):

- 1) **YOUR NAME:** Charlotte Allegra Rice Clark
- 2) **POSITION YOU ARE RUNNING FOR:** Town Council
- 3) **DISTRICT (TOWN COUNCIL CANDIDATES ONLY):** At large

Housing, land use & climate justice

In your own words:

1. What is your approach to land use planning, zoning, development, and affordable housing?
I think we need to balance open space and conservation with smart development. I would like changes to inclusionary zoning to maximize affordability. I think any increased density calls for increased public transportation. All new development should be net-zero. I would like more

housing that is subsidized at 30% of a persons income, as over 40% of Amherst households are currently cost-burdened.

2. What is your definition of climate justice? How would you advance climate justice and protect our ecosystems as a town councillor?

Climate justice must center the people in the most affected communities- including those marginalized due to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class-, who are often not the primary contributors to climate change. Climate impacts must be considered through every department of town. I would like to see a review of progress towards the goals outlined in the CAARP from 2021, with community input continually sought. I would continue to advocate for retrofitting buildings to reduce carbon emissions; incentivizing weatherization and greener energy in homes; and alternative energy sources such as solar on the built environment.

3. How can the town improve the maintenance of roads and other transportation infrastructure?

The town needs more frequent public transportation along more routes. The town needs better infrastructure for biking safety, including more bike lanes and bike lanes on arterial roads. The town would also benefit from better sidewalk connectivity, especially along East Pleasant. For roads, I would like to see less rotary projects like what was done in Echo Hill and more actual repairs. At the forum, a few candidates brought up the idea of regional bidding for contracts, which i think could be a potential process. The town also needs to provide better working conditions for DPW and negotiate a fair contract, as this is a department integral to road maintenance that is currently in mediation with the town.

4. How will you work to ensure Amherst recognizes its connection and responsibilities to local Tribal Nations and establishes collaborative relationships? I'd be interested to see if a similar reparative process to the African Heritage Reparations Assembly would be possible with regards to local Tribal Nations. I think the town has caused harm recently when a pow wow that was scheduled to be held on the common was moved to the high school due to conflicts with the Farmer's Market. I would be curious about rematriation efforts, both in Amherst and regionally (like Belchertown's Lampson Brook Farm efforts). This can only happen with open dialogue.

Please mark “yes” or “no”:

1. If there were legislation proposed that would make public transportation free at the point of service in your municipality, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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2. If there were legislation proposed that would help the establishment of community land trusts in Amherst, would you vote in favor of it? Current supporter:

<https://www.amherstcommunitylandtrust.org/>

Yes	x	No	
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3. If there were legislation put forth that would help convert empty offices/hotels into affordable housing and treatment centers, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	x	No	
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4. If an ordinance to create an immediate moratorium on expanding fossil fuel pipelines were put forth, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	x	No	
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5. If legislation were proposed that would help bring the energy grid under public and democratic control through municipal and state buyouts, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	x	No	
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6. If legislation were proposed to create and implement an Amherst town Land Acknowledgment, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	x	No	
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7. Would you support legislation to end broker's fees?

Yes	x	No	
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8. If a resolution were proposed in favor of rent control, including a request for home rule powers to stabilize city rents, would you vote in favor of it? I

've been collecting signatures for the ballot

Yes	x	No	
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9. If legislation were introduced increasing tenant protection policies, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	x	No	
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10. Would you vote in favor of creating a Tenant Protection Board to enforce tenants rights?

Yes	x	No	
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Policing, criminalization, & racial justice

In your own words:

1. What is your stance on policing in Amherst?
<https://www.amherstindy.org/2025/04/04/indy-rewind-an-introduction-to-police-abolition-for-amherst-residents/> This is a piece I collaborated with then added to with DEFUND413Amherst. I have been vocal about oversurveillance of marginalized communities, police brutality, inflated budgets, and the need for an alternative. I participated in organizing in support of the Amherst 9 (9 youth, 6 BIPOC, who were told they had no rights during an incident with police) including attending joint town council meetings as co-chair of the Community Safety and Social Justice Committee, and planning rallies. I believe Amherst's resources would be better spent on community programs and proactive safety measures (housing, healthcare, mental health) than armed police, as violent crime makes up about 7% of the calls.
2. Do you support restoring and increasing resources for CRESS at the level called for by the CSWG and CRESS?? Why or why not? If you are an incumbent, describe how you have or have not advocated for CRESS in relation to the CSWG's recommendations and CRESS's past requisitions.
YES!!!! I believe CRESS has been purposefully underresourced, and met with resistance as it pushes against the status quo. CRESS should be on dispatch from 911 so that they can answer the non-violent, non-criminal calls and they should be available 24/7 just like police and fire currently are. The LEAP report from 2021 outlined call types CRESS could respond to by time of day, with the majority occurring from 4p-12p. CRESS works 8A-4P, so it is not active during the time when it would be most useful. Also, CRESS responders were supposed to replace police positions as the program became more established, but the conversation remains CRESS on top of current police staffing levels. I do not believe data collection has been consistent across leadership, and I think this has added to the skepticism. However, we must adjust both dispatch and hours to see how CRESS can thrive when implemented as intended.
3. Would you work to ensure non-cooperation with ICE in Amherst? How would you work to ensure that our schools are safe from ICE?
I would like to see bold legislation that protects any resident who is witness to or attempts to interrupt ICE detention from any criminal charges. I would like to see bold legislation, similar to Chicago banning ICE from courts, that would ban ICE from municipal buildings, grounds and school property. I would vote against any attempt to engage with the 287(g) program. As far as schools, I would want to

see policies that address safety on grounds and at transportation stops. I think a lot of community organizing and mutual aid support is imperative, and that the town can support this by not criminalizing it.

Please mark “yes” or “no”:

1. If legislation were put forth to eliminate Amherst’s involvement with the 1033 program, which transfers military arms and equipment to civilian police departments, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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2. Would you vote in favor of legislation that would prevent any partnerships between Amherst police and Israel, otherwise known as [“the deadly exchange”](#)?

Yes	X	No	
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3. Would you vote in favor of a budget that decreases the police budget and reallocates the money towards social services and community safety programs?

Yes	X	No	
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4. If legislation were proposed that bans the use and storage of chemical irritants by your municipality’s police, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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5. If legislation were put forth to remove police from traffic work and replace them with non-police traffic workers, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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6. If legislation were put forth to remove police from responding to nonviolent mental health and other disability-related emergency-response calls, replacing them with peer-led emergency responders and EMTs, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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7. If legislation were put forth that could help end cash bail, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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8. If legislation were put forth that would strengthen Amherst’s commitments to noncooperation with ICE, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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9. October 14th is now an official federal holiday for Columbus Day and Charlie Kirk. Would you speak publicly about, and advocate for the town to not observe this holiday?

("Yes" means "Yes, I will advocate for Amherst NOT observe Charlie Kirk day.")

"No" means "No, I will NOT advocate for Amherst to not observe Charlie Kirk day.")

<https://www.amherstindy.org/2025/10/09/amherst-proclaims-october-14-as-george-floyd-day-but-not-without-pushback/> (the article in which I and other candidates and community leaders did just that)

Yes	X	No	
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10. If legislation were put forth that would remove non-emergency police presence from our public schools, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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11. If legislation were proposed to budget \$1 million for CRESS, the amount recommended by the Community Safety and Social Justice committee, would you vote in favor of providing this funding?

Yes	X	No	
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12. Would you vote against a proposed budget that increases the police budget?

Yes	X	No	
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13. If a budget were proposed that inadequately funds CRESS by giving it less than what it has requested, would you vote against it?

Yes	X	No	
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14. Would you be committed to working with and meeting the needs of the Black Business Association?

Yes	X	No	
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15. Would you vote in favor of implementing mandatory antiracism training for town officials?

Yes	X	No	
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16. Would you prioritize and advocate for the BIPOC youth center to be created and funded at the level that the Community Safety Working Group called for?

Yes	X	No	
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Policies for the working class

Please mark “yes” or “no”:

1. If legislation were put forth that would protect the right of public sector workers to go on strike, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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2. If legislation were put forth that would support the abolition of the tipped minimum wage system in Massachusetts, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X*	No	
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3. If legislation were put forth that would establish project-labor agreements pledging to use union labor for large public projects, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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4. If legislation were put forth which supported welfare of sex workers, including but not limited to full decriminalization, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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5. If legislation were put forth that would support establishing safe consumption sites in Amherst, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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6. Do you support the human right to free abortion on demand?

Yes	X	No	
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7. If legislation were put forth that would regulate Crisis Pregnancy Centers that misleadingly claim to offer reproductive healthcare services, but seek to dissuade individuals from having abortions, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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8. Do you support Medicare for All?

Yes	X	No	
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9. If legislation were introduced to implement a municipal living wage ordinance that keeps pace with the cost of living, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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10. Would you publicly support municipal and local unions in their demands for higher wages and better conditions?

Yes	X	No	
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11. If legislation were introduced to include pro-worker requirements and labor neutrality agreements as a prerequisite to receive beneficial tax treatment from the city, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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12. If legislation were introduced that eliminated unnecessary fines and fees that place a burden on poor and working class residents of Amherst, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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Education

In your own words:

1. Are budget increases to our schools necessary? If so, why? If not, why not and how would you answer those that say our educational spending is already taking up too much of our town budget?

We must keep our school budgets at, at the very least, level funding. We have seen year after year of staffing cut, causing unsafe learning environments and instability for our kids. We have many fabulous educators who deserve a dignified wage. To those who would say schools are taking up too much of our budget, I would ask if groceries are taking up the same amount of your household budget as they did 1, 2, 3 years ago. The answer is that costs have gone up, and education is not exempt from this. We have significant populations receiving special education services and english language learning services, which are imperative for these students to receive an equitable education. We cannot continue to balance the checkbook of the town on the backs of our most vulnerable students and the educators who support them (paraphrased from a former para-educator).

2. How would you support capital spending for school building repairs and facility improvements in light of existing capital projects such as the new elementary school and the Jones Library renovations?

If the council has not made a decision by the new term, I would be in support of additional funding for roof repairs at the middle school. I believe we have to prioritize by utilization of buildings. I would push against any requests for additional funding for the Jones, and request that the trustees secure any funds not raised from borrowing on their own. This would leave available capital for schools.

3. How can schools best provide a quality education for all students in a climate of reduced federal monies to our local schools?

I think we need to get more creative in applying for grants. Additionally, in terms of funding, I think we could try and tap alumni for giving opportunities, as there are some famous local alumni who have recently won awards in their fields. I think continued conversations with local higher education institutions to address PILOT possibilities are also imperative.

4. What are your views on School Choice and charter schools?

I think the state, not the local municipalities, should fund charter schools. I will continue to advocate for legislation that supports this. We lose \$2million+ a year to charter schools.

5. How would you work to ensure that students with special needs have a robust local educational system and they and their families feel supported in Amherst?

I think it starts with listening to families when they have concerns about their child's needs. We need to be in compliance with IEPs. We need adequate staff to support the diversity of needs we see. One beautiful example is the ILC at Wildwood- I hope this is a model for all programs in the district.

6. How will you ensure Queer and Trans students and their families are supported in Amherst schools?

Though outside the purview of town council. I would want to see swift action about reported bullying. I would want to see corrective action following progressive discipline if a situation similar to 2023 were occurring again. I think adequate staff training around the needs of Queer and Trans students is important.

7. Is liberatory education a priority for you? How will you support educators to protect the integrity of education in Amherst schools in light of attempts to exert federal control over curricula and censor non-white and LGBTQ experiences from public education?

Yes. Again, out of the purview of town council but I think it is imperative that Amherst continue to have learning experiences centering the histories of those most marginalized from their perspective. At the town level, I would support efforts of non-compliance with any anti-DEI directives. And I will continue to show

up at Wildwood (and the new school) for events such as the Martin Luther King march, the Latin American dance night and the Multicultural fair.

Please mark “yes” or “no”:

1. Will you push to prevent the expansion and enlargement of charter schools in your municipality?

Yes	X	No	
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2. If legislation were put forth that would support the establishment of a universal pre-K program for children ages three and four, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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3. If legislation were put forth that would support the establishment of a publicly-run daycare in Amherst, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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4. If legislation were put forth that would help create before- and after-school programs for children of all ages, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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5. Would you vote against a town budget that does not fund the schools at the level that the SOS coalition is calling for?

Yes	X	No	
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6. Would you advocate for expanding Caminantes bilingual programming into the middle school and high school?

Yes	X	No	
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7. Will you advocate and push for capital expenditures for public school building repairs at the amount that the SOS coalition calls for?

Yes	X	No	
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8. Will you advocate for reducing budget cuts to special education at the amount that the SOS coalition calls for?

Yes	X	No	
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9. The Republican-led MA Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism's recommendations have been vehemently opposed by anti-Zionist Jewish organizations who argue that these commissions are tools to implement a repressive, racist political agenda, not to combat anti-Semitism. Would you vote against adopting the recommendations of the MA Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism, in favor of antiracism provisions that use a collective liberation framework?

Yes	X	No	
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11. Would you support expanding existing anti-racism education using a collective liberation framework?

Yes	X	No	
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12. Would you vote in favor of recommending that schools teach content on Palestine from a decolonial perspective drawing from [Rethinking Schools](#), the [Zinn Education Project](#), and/or other organizations approved of by Palestinian human rights organizations?

Yes	X	No	
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13. Would you support a commitment to not partner with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), to terminate any partnerships that may currently exist, and to replace any ADL-authored resources on antisemitism or racism with those that use a collective liberation framework? (source: [Drop the ADL from Schools, Resources](#))

Yes	X	No	
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Migrant justice

In your own words:

1. Amherst is a "sanctuary community" for immigrants. How will you work to fulfill and expand on this commitment?
I would support continued non-compliance with ICE. I would support protecting places of worship as sanctuaries. I would support efforts, such as those put forth by the Human Rights Commission, LWVA and LUCE network, to educate bystanders and promote knowing your rights. I would support any effort from residents to form mutual aid support networks and rapid response, and would support this not being considered a criminal act.
2. How would you support the provision of emergency resources (related to housing, food, and legal assistance) for immigrant residents in town, regardless of citizenship status?

I wouldn't want there to be proof of citizenship status required in order to access these resources.

Please mark “yes” or “no”:

1. If legislation were introduced banning law enforcement and schools from cooperating with and sharing information with ICE, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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2. If legislation or programs were proposed that would support migrant justice in Amherst, would you vote in favor of them?

Yes	X	No	
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3. If you had the power to grant instant citizenship to all currently undocumented immigrants, would you?

Yes	X	No	
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4. Do you support antiracism education using a collective liberation framework?

Yes	X	No	
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Human Rights

In your own words:

1. What is your stance on whether Amherst should divest from any investments that are connected to Israel's apartheid regime?

I would support this.

2. How do global issues, including colonialism, impact local communities and vice versa, and how do you view your responsibility as town councilor to address them?

I remember in high school there was a bumper sticker that said “think globally act locally.” I agree with this sentiment. I see our struggles as interconnected. I know when I was being knelt on by a Mass State Police officer at the UMass encampment, his unit had received training from the IDF. As such, I think it is appropriate to address global issues as they relate to our community values.

Please mark “yes” or “no”:

1. If legislation supporting the BDS (Boycott Divestment Sanctions) movement were introduced, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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2. Do you agree that Israel carrying out a genocide of the Palestinian people?

Yes	X	No	
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3. If legislation were introduced that called for ending Amherst's contracts with or investments in corporations that are complicit in or profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestine, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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4. If legislation were introduced requiring Amherst to divest its pension funds from defense contractors, fossil fuel companies, companies complicit in genocide, apartheid, and war crimes, and prison-related industries, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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5. Do you support the MA Indigenous Legislative Agenda? (<http://mainindigenoussagenda.org/>)

Yes	X	No	
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6. If legislation were introduced that helped protect LGBTQ rights, which are currently under attack both nationally and in Massachusetts, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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Democracy and the budget

In your own words:

1. Which groups of people and communities do you think should be prioritized in setting our budget and policy priorities?

All groups that have been traditionally marginalized (i.e. not white men). Specifically, Black, Latine, Asian, Indigenous, LGBTQIA, low-income, disabled and women. Also, children and seniors.

2. How would you ensure the groups of people you listed are prioritized in decision making for the town?

I think we have to do the opposite of what we are doing now. A few examples of how it shouldn't be but is:

<https://www.amherstindy.org/2025/09/11/commission-for-persons-with-disabilities-left-out-of-loop-again/>

<https://www.amherstindy.org/2021/05/28/community-safety-working-group-made-to-wait-2-hours-to-join-their-own-meeting-town-manager-proposes-spending-475k-on-cswgs-2-4m-programs/>

I think that having the committees actually act in advisory capacity to the council, and having diverse representation are important steps.

Please mark “yes” or “no”:

1. Amherst already passed Ranked Choice Voting and is waiting on the state legislature to decide on a home rule exemption. Would you urge state representatives to push this forward in the state legislature?

Yes	X	No	
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2. If legislation were introduced which would support restoring the right to vote for people who are currently in prison for felony charges, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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3. If legislation were introduced to implement a participatory budgeting approach that ensures proper representation from poor and working class residents and other underrepresented groups, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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4. If legislation were introduced requiring local higher education institutions to give increased support for public education and town expenses, would you vote in favor of it?

Yes	X	No	
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5. If more funding for the library project were proposed would you vote against it?

Yes	X	No	
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Campaign Information

Please mark “yes” or “no”:

1. Will you refuse contributions from (Y/N):

1. Developers and Real Estate Lawyers?

Yes	X	No	
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2. Police Fraternal Associations?

Yes	X	No	
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3. Healthcare Lobbyists & Executives?

Yes	X	No	
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4. Fossil Fuel Executives & Lobbyists?

Yes	X	No	
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5. Charter School Lobbyists & Executives?

Yes	X	No	
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Section 13. Final Thoughts

1. If you would like to clarify any Yes/No response, please do so here:

In terms of tipped wage, i have heard mixed opinions about what would be best. If the concern is equity related and a minimum wage would reduce disparities, I would support.

2. What else should we know about you or your campaign?

Currently co-chair of the Community Safety and Social Justice Committee
Currently a member of the Amherst Municipal Affordable Housing Trust
www.allegraforamherst.org

3. Any other feedback you would like to leave about this questionnaire?

