

# 2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

This questionnaire is for candidates running in Municipal Elections, please complete questionnaire below. Submit a completed electronic copy by Thursday, February 27, 2025, to be considered for endorsement in the 2025 Municipal Elections.

Email \*

maxiejohnsondistrict@gmail.com

## General Information

Candidate Name \*

Maxie Johnson

1. District/Office Sought \*

Dallas City Council Place 4

2. Are you a current member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? \*

Yes

No

3. Please share any experience that illustrates your understanding of and interest in the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in your District/Role sought.

I have served as a DISD Trustee for the past 6 years and as a district we are currently in the crosshairs of Attorney Gen. Ken Paxton because of his crusade against transgender students participating in athletic activities. I have been a coach for longer than I have been an elected official and, to be clear, I stand with our students on this issue, not Ken Paxton.

Our district also has a clear anti-bullying policy which I, as the policy chair, continue to stand on. Far too often, our schools are places where LGBTQ+ people experience their first confrontations about their identity. I have zero tolerance for people who target others because of how they were born. These policies need to continue to be enforced at all levels so it becomes our way of life rather than something that policy needs to dictate.

Tolerance, acceptance, and celebration of our identities must be our default as residents in Dallas.

4. As an organization affiliated with the Texas Democratic Party, Stonewall Democrats of Dallas \* will only endorse candidates who affirm an affiliation with the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party. Do you make such an affirmation? What is your previous voting history (please explain any changes in party affiliation)?

I affirm. I am a verifiable Democrat via my primary voting history.

5. Please list some of your qualifications and experiences pertinent to the office you are seeking:

I was elected to the Dallas ISD Board of Trustees to represent District 5 in May 2019. District 5 is a large and diverse district that spans Wilmer Texas, West Dallas, Oak Lawn, Uptown, and a large portion of South Oak Cliff and shares a great portion of the District 4 city boundaries.

I also serve as pastor at New Morning Star Baptist Church in West Dallas.

Before becoming an elected official, I served as PTA president and Vice Chair of the Site Base Decision Making Committee for South Oak Cliff. As a community organizer I stood with the South Oak Cliff Alumni Association, community stakeholders, student leaders - including standing with my son David, to successfully advocate and procure \$52 million dollars in funding for improvements and renovations of the campus. My advocacy and board leadership has led to over \$400 million documented improvements in the southern sector.

6. Once you are elected, what are some of your priorities and plans specific to your office's responsibilities?

Rather than copy and paste from my website, I'll share that my four main priority areas are as follows: Quality of Life, Public Safety, Economic Development, and support for our seniors. I believe these areas are broad enough to improve our city for all of its residents while also specific enough to give some insight into how I view the office of city council.

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### Housing

This section addresses housing and homelessness within the LGBTQ+ community.

7. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, please rate your city's response to housing affordability and briefly explain your rating.

6. As long as we have people living on the street, we are not effectively responding to the crisis. As long as we have vacant units while applicants who can afford them are being rejected, cannot earn a "passing grade" as a city. The point-in-time count for 2024 shows a positive trend in the right direction; however, there is still a long way to go.

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8. Please list a specific policy/ordinance you would like to introduce or repeal to address the housing supply issue

LGBTQIA+ adults and youth face a greater risk of homelessness than their peers. I think our attention needs to be on increasing the housing inventory and available beds for people rather than criminalizing behavior often associated with the condition of homelessness.

If we as a city are at the point where we're criminalizing sleeping, something has gone terribly wrong. I would like to repeal SEC. 31-13, the sleeping in a public place ordinance. I think this forces our already overburdened police department to include in their duties the monitoring of people simply relaxing and making the decision on whether or not they are sleeping, "dozing" as is mentioned in the ordinance, and if they have been doing so for a length of time that requires a direct intervention.

I think repealing this would also force the conversation on the availability of housing at all income levels, including transitional housing, and the necessary resources required to eliminate homelessness as a condition here in Dallas. This would not simply be a headline grabbing move. I would pair this with first a push to make shelters safer and more accessible at hours that are not prohibitive to people who work nights, as well as creative solutions around the use of city land for temporary housing.

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9. What's the biggest threat to LGBTQ+ folks with respect to housing security and what are your plans to address housing insecurity within this community specifically?

Despite it being 2025, we still have families to kick out and cut off their LGBTQ+ children and family members. These acts of cruelty often catch people unaware and unprepared, resulting in an immediate crisis. These can also lead to mental health issues and/or substance abuse resulting from that trauma. This mix of heartbreak and desperation can lead to the conditions that cause our LGBTQ+ people to get caught up in the criminal justice system, making it difficult to get or keep sufficient employment to provide for themselves. While each of these are threats, the cycle itself is the biggest threat.

Once caught in the loop of homelessness, it is difficult to break out. Requirements for renting the already limited units in our city are very difficult if you aren't already employed and receiving compensation well above the AMI. Three months rent and other such requirements some landlords and others require place housing firmly out of reach for those most desperate for it. That is only compounded by health issues and criminal backgrounds.

I will work to fix the system and to ensure there are safe and accessible options and resources for people at all levels of need.

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10. What specific ordinances or policies would you suggest or support to address housing inequality and rental pricing, such as a ban on algorithmic rent control?

Banning algorithmic rent control is exactly such a policy I would suggest. AI and technology have not yet come far enough to replicate human empathy and understanding. The result is a process that is cold, unfeeling, and predatory.

I am pro-business, but I also believe myself to be anti-greed. I think people can make a profit without keeping units vacant and people unhoused just for the possibility of a few extra dollars. That is not who we are as a people or a city. I would also apply my previous thoughts to using AI and other technologies to automatically reject applications for renters.

Public Safety (Includes Fire, 911, School safety, and all safety departments)

This section addresses Public Safety within the LGBTQ+ community

11. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, please rate your city's delivery of public safety services to the community and briefly explain your rating. \*

7. Violent crime has been decreasing for the 4th year in a row. That needs to be celebrated. That said, in the district I am seeking to represent, District 4, we are still experiencing slow response times and do not have a police station within our boundaries.

We are facing a pension crisis that still has not been resolved and now have an obligation to increase the size of our police force.

DPD's LGBTQ+ Liaison Officers and the SAFE PLACE initiative are steps in the right direction, but these are the things we need to spread more awareness about and increase support for if we are going to get beyond "passing" as a city in our delivery of public safety services. Being ok is not good and being good is not good enough. A world-class city demands world-class public safety.

12. Please list one public safety policy you support and why and one public safety policy you oppose and why. \*

I think we should investigate violent crimes against members of the LGBTQ+ communities as hate crimes proactively rather than reactively applying it to enhance existing charges. The climate in our country at all levels necessitates such a response. We need to make it harder, not easier, for people to make the choice to do harm to someone just because they are different. If they do, there should be no hiding it. We have to make it clear that such actions are not tolerated in Dallas and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

For the reasons above, I oppose us not doing that already. My answer is both sides of the same policy/procedure.

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13. Please address how you would work with public safety officials across all appropriate levels of government to ensure LGBTQ+ people feel safe, secure, and respected within your respective jurisdiction. \*

I commit to both meeting with the LGBTQ+ liaisons at DPD as well as meeting with organizations and community members who identify as LGBTQ+ to make sure I am informed and aware of key priorities and current events in the LGBTQ+ community. I want this relationship and these meetings to be consistent and transparent. I am always reachable by phone and want to have a minimum of 2 formal convenings per year.

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14. Have there been any recent incidents involving LGBTQ+ hate or violence in your city, if so how do you plan to address this? If not, what can other cities learn in order to reduce these occurrences? \*

I want to be very clear here that violence happens involving and against LGBTQ+ people in our city every single day. While it may not make the news or be seen, our LGBTQ+ people experience spousal abuse, relationship violence, assault, murder, and hate crimes on a regular basis. This is unacceptable and a tragedy we need to be actively working to address.

Three examples from Dallas come to mind.

LaDamonyon DeeDee Hall died in Dallas while being transported to the hospital in 2022

LaKendra Andrews was murdered in Dallas in 2023

Muhlaysia Booker was murdered in Dallas in 2019

While not in Dallas, Dylan Gurley was murdered in Denton in 2024

These are not isolated incidents. As a pastor, I preach a message of love for all people; however, I understand that this is not something the faith community alone can fix from the pulpit on Sunday. From the city council to the judicial system, we need to call these acts of violence what they are: completely avoidable.

Before we get to the point where a life is lost, we need to provide the necessary resources to our first responders as well as our community organizations so that the best fit interventions and responses can take place.

We also need to investigate these kinds of incidents as hate crimes so they can be appropriately investigated and where applicable, prosecuted as such.

15. If you are not a member of a historically marginalized group, what is your understanding of the needs of these groups with respect to public safety? \*

I am a Black man and have lost a son to gun violence. It is from that perspective I view public safety. Though my experiences are different from those experienced by our LGBTQ+ community, I am all too familiar with slow or no response times, guilty before proven innocent investigation and prosecution, and the challenges of working through the legal systems as a member of a historically marginalized community.

I answer this question knowing, though I am not LGBTQ+, I have a role to play as an ally and an advocate for all of my constituents. It is through listening, learning, and effectively representing constituents of all backgrounds that I have come to deepen my understanding of the issues impacting them. I believe I have done that as a school board trustee for the last 6 years and look forward to continuing that as a council member.

### Environmental

This section addresses Environmental protections within marginalized communities.

16. Please list a specific policy/ordinance that you would suggest or support to advance making <sup>\*</sup> your city more climate resilient.

As a city councilperson, proactive policy and the structuring of agreements for businesses coming here or currently operating would be areas that I would explore to make the city more climate resilient while continuing to keep Dallas pro-business. Examples of this would be studying the heat island impact of future developments, addressing the proximity to green space in our district, and regularly reviewing and improving flood infrastructure and drainage.

I am a pro-park and pro-nature person. I think we need to be actively increasing and protecting our green spaces and doing what we can to ensure our city becomes increasingly habitable to native species by developing responsibly.

17. What are your plans to address environmental injustices for marginalized communities <sup>\*</sup> within your city?

Environmental justice, to me, focuses on the fair distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. I will work with my colleagues to identify past injustices and prevent additional burdens on my district. Rather than simply spreading around environmental damage, I will also push for an environmental justice or environmental enhancement provision in any incentives we offer to people seeking to do business in Dallas.

We have plenty of local examples of where people and businesses have fallen short in holding up environmental justice, like shingle mountain, the factories (and resulting environmental impact) in West Dallas, or widespread illegal dumping. We must ensure that marginalized communities are not disproportionately affected by pollution, toxic waste, or poor living conditions. The rates of asthma and other related health issues are disproportionately represented in our community. Air, water, and ground pollution are more prevalent in communities of color like ours in District 4.

Requiring anyone seeking to do business with the city to play an active part in improving the environment here is one option to explore in not just preventing decline, but moving things in a positive direction.

### Communications

This section addresses Communication Methods between elected officials and marginalized communities.



18. How do you plan to work with allies and organizations across all appropriate levels of government to present a cohesive message of unified support for the LGBTQ+ community? \*

Listening and learning is key. Leadership is a two way street, and sometimes it becomes appropriate to follow the will of the community and constituents most directly impacted by particular issues. I started my journey to elected office as a community organizer and advocate. That is still very much a part of my leadership style. I will actively reach out to consult with our groups and organizations that primarily focus on LGBTQ+ community advocacy and welcome those groups to reach out to me. I want to serve as a convener to bring groups together so we can be as united as possible in our public advocacy. I want dialogue to be open, transparent, and consistent.

19. How do you plan to work with allies and organizations across all appropriate levels of government to present a cohesive message of unified support for the LGBTQ+ community? \*

I believe this is the same question as above.

Listening and learning is key. Leadership is a two way street, and sometimes it becomes appropriate to follow the will of the community and constituents most directly impacted by particular issues. I started my journey to elected office as a community organizer and advocate. That is still very much a part of my leadership style. I will actively reach out to consult with our groups and organizations that primarily focus on LGBTQ+ community advocacy and welcome those groups to reach out to me. I want to serve as a convener to bring groups together so we can be as united as possible in our public advocacy. I want dialogue to be open, transparent, and consistent.

20. Will you commit to being an active partner and supporter of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? \*

Yes

No

### Local Governance

This section addresses the attack on Local Governance from the State Legislature.

21. Do you believe the State Legislature has engaged or will engage in government overreach? \*  
Briefly explain your answer.

Yes, and I think the intention to overreach has been made very clear from the federal government to the State Legislature. While "local control" was once taken very seriously, we are now seeing an increased interest in what cities can or cannot enforce beyond what the state enforces, what our students are allowed to have in our libraries, and which bathrooms people can use or sports they can play.

The appropriate place for our legislature to focus on and engage would be in fully funding our public school system, not which bathrooms people attending or working in underfunded schools are using.

22. Please list one specific policy/ordinance that you feel would best advance LGBTQ+ rights on a local level \*

As mentioned above, I would be in favor of a local ordinance/policy having violence against LGBTQ+ people treated as a hate crime until being ruled otherwise. I think a strong stance like this must be made to protect freedom of speech and expression at all levels for our LGBTQ+ community.

23. What is your opinion of local police department cooperating with ICE? \*

I agree with the current stance of Interim Police Chief Michael Igo in not engaging in racial programming, protecting civil rights, and not stopping people to confirm their immigration status. I also think DPD should continue cooperating with all federal agencies in attempting to apprehend people wanted for criminal offenses not including immigration suspicions.

I do not believe DPD should be expanding their mission or expending their resources to confirm the citizenship of every person in Dallas. They have their hands full keeping people safe. They do not need that additional directive on their plates, nor should they welcome it.

All Candidates

All candidates will need to answer the following questions.

24. Is there anything in your past or background that has not been covered by the previous questions that might – without careful explanation - cause our organization to reconsider or withdraw our endorsement of you?

I don't believe so. I have answered honestly and in alignment with my principles. I hope to earn your support, your trust, and look forward to working with you to move our city in a positive direction.

25. I'm seeking an endorsement from the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas for the 2025 Municipal \* election. (Please type name)

Maxie Johnson

This form was created inside of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas.

