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## 2023 Council At-Large Questionnaire

Prepared by: Rue Landau

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### CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION

Candidate Name: Rue Landau

I have read the attached questionnaire responses and certify that the information provided is accurate and the opinions stated accurately reflect my own positions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rue Landau". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Candidate Signature:

Date: 1.12.23

**Please complete, sign and return this form via email in Word format to: [info@phillynn.org](mailto:info@phillynn.org) and Gloria Gilman [gmgilman@gmail.com](mailto:gmgilman@gmail.com). Also mail a copy with the signature page to**

**Gloria Gilman  
121 S. Broad St., Suite 1710  
Philadelphia, PA 19107**

### I. INTRODUCTION

Although many of the questions in Section III below call for a simple yes or no answer, please feel free to provide an explanation for any of your choices. If you have not yet come to a final decision, or don't currently have enough information to provide an informed answer, please so state.

## II. BACKGROUND

1. What, if any, elected or appointed government office(s) have you held?

I served as the director of both the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) and the Fair Housing Commission (FHC), the city's civil rights and housing enforcement agencies. During my 12-year tenure, I helped transform the agencies into national models for government and community engagement, social justice, and equitable opportunity. Working with City Council, I led initiatives to overhaul and expand the city's Fair Practices Ordinance and Fair Housing Ordinance, adding civil rights protections including wage equity, fair chance hiring for people with criminal records, reasonable accommodations for pregnant and breastfeeding women, and good cause eviction safeguards, among others. I also oversaw efforts to strengthen existing laws to create added protections for marginalized populations, including the LGBTQ+ community.

I also have been an elected Eighth Ward Committeeperson and I currently serve as an elected Second Ward Committeeperson.

2. With respect to your other qualifications for the office of At-Large Council member:

a. What community or policy issues have you worked on, and in what capacity? (Please provide the names of two or three individuals who can provide information about your previous work.)

Throughout my early years as an activist, and my career as a lawyer at Community Legal Services, and as the director of both the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) and the Fair Housing Commission (FHC), I have worked on many essential issues ranging from housing justice, civil rights, racial and economic justice, women's rights and LGBTQ+ rights. People who can provide information about my work are: Rachel Garland, Rasheedah Phillips, Karen Forman, Amber Hikes and Chris Bartlett.

c. What other endorsements have you received?

I am about to roll out the confirmed endorsements of several state and City elected leaders as well as organized labor. Please check my website in the coming weeks. I am pursuing a number of other endorsements from the Democratic party, individuals, labor, progressive and advocacy groups and other officials across the city, and I am confident that my campaign will receive robust support.

d. How do you plan to win?

I am running a strong campaign and will have the backing and resources to communicate directly in a targeted fashion with voters across the City. I am a coalition-builder, and I am seeking to garner support from a diverse and cross-section of groups, stakeholders and elected officials. Our campaign's outreach strategy will focus on direct voter contact in several forms – including face-to-face canvassing and Election Day street operations, paid digital and mail. Everything we do will be targeted and intentional. My campaign team has modeled targeted divisions and wards where we believe we can pull the most votes, and our outreach efforts will, in part, follow those models. That said, I intend to represent all Philadelphians and will work hard to do outreach to the entire City. Finally, I want to use our campaign to build a diverse coalition of stakeholders that we will utilize for policy issues when I get into office.

e. How much money have you raised? How much do you expect to raise?

We closed 2022 raising more than \$135,000 in 60 days. My campaign is budgeted at \$400,000-\$500,000.

3. What three things would you most want to accomplish if elected?

1) Prioritize community solutions to gun violence by utilizing proven methods from other jurisdictions that focus on targeted positive interventions; scaling up community policing and de-escalation training; encouraging positive police-community relations;

2) Increase investments in neighborhoods, including public school facilities, rec centers, libraries, and community spaces; with a particular focus on historically dis-or underinvested neighborhoods; and

3) Improve affordable housing opportunities and sustainably refurbish existing stock.

### **III. ISSUES**

#### **A. Economic Development**

**What do you see as the current economic picture of Philadelphia and what would you do to make economic development more just, fair, and equitable for all Philadelphians?**

Philadelphia is at a crossroads, and I believe that any future economic development in our city must be done through the lens of racial and economic justice – with an emphasis on helping working families. We are routinely listed as one of the poorest big cities in America. It doesn't have to be this way, and many of the answers to begin to change this problem can come from City Hall. We must create more jobs and economic opportunities that provide prevailing and higher wages, particularly for Black and brown people and others in our most marginalized communities. Developers should not be given a free pass by City Hall – they should be pushed to work in tandem with communities to help us build stronger, more sustainable neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia with opportunities for long-term residents and working families to remain and thrive.

Would you back legislation to:

1. Impose an impact fee on businesses failing to pay workers \$15/hr to reimburse the City for the costs of relieving poverty?

Yes. As a member of Council I would do everything in my power to construct this legislation in a way that would not unfairly harm small businesses, especially businesses owned by people of color – and introduce additional legislation that would incentivize and empower small businesses to pay a fair wage. This could include tax incentives.

2. Take \$200 million of City pension funds now invested in risky securities to invest in neighborhood economic development projects, through a public bank or otherwise?

Yes, transferring our investments from risky securities to a solid public bank institution and investing the funds in a way that would have a positive impact for neighborhood economic development is smart

governance. I also believe that City Hall should work to find funding sources to ensure pension promises are still met, as well. My office would be interested in doing both.

3. Create a program to provide technical assistance and start-up funding for cooperative, worker-owned businesses and housing?

Yes, I believe legislation that would provide support and funding to new, worker-owned businesses would be smart. I would be interested in exploring potential public-private partnerships to achieve this, as well as creating incubator programs that foster worker-led small business development. My office would have an open door policy while considering/developing such legislation to hear from constituents who are workers and interested in receiving and building such businesses – as well as hearing from those who have already successfully done so in Philadelphia.

4. Take whatever steps are needed to create and fund a Bank of Philadelphia to hold all City deposits and invest them locally?

Yes, and I am glad that our city has finally moved in this direction. A public bank will increase equity and help drive more funds toward important projects and initiatives here in the City.

5. Create a system of participatory budgeting that would allow City residents to control allocation of all or a portion of the funds allocated in the City budget?

Participatory budgeting already [exists to some degree](#) in Philadelphia, but I would be open to expanding the amount of funds that could be directed by residents.

## **B. Education**

**What are the root causes for the current state of Philadelphia Public Schools and what would you do to address these issues?**

Every child in Philadelphia – regardless of their background, race, or zip code – should have access to a great education in a safe facility. There’s no question that the current state of Philadelphia Public Schools is largely due to the deliberate underfunding and disinvestment by the state legislature. I have been following and supporting the Fair Funding lawsuit, and hope we ultimately receive a ruling that will lead to more equitable funding. But there is also a crisis of faith in the District leadership stretching across the last decade, and families have felt discounted and left in the dark for too long. It’s vital that school communities feel seen, and are treated like partners in shaping the future of the District.

One of my top priorities once elected would be to focus on remediating our crumbling and often dangerous school facilities. City Hall needs to work with the District and focus on funding our facilities so that our students, teachers and faculty are safe and can focus on educating and learning. I am particularly opposed to using poor school facilities as an excuse for school closures, and in support of prioritizing modern facilities for every school. This facilities master plan must be transparent and equitable.

Specifically, would you back legislation to:

1. Regulate charter schools by making their budgetary practices transparent, ridding them of conflicts of interest, and stopping them from cherry-picking their student bodies? Would you be willing to attach that plan to a budget rider?

Yes. Charter schools draw essential funding from public schools and too often they lack transparency and accountability. More transparency is needed.

2. Make the School Board an elective office, or otherwise deepen community participation in School Board appointments?

Yes. Philadelphia should join countless other communities that have a more democratic process in choosing School Board representatives. For a few reasons, I would be supportive of a hybrid model which empowers voters to choose members of the board but still gives the Mayor's Office and Council control of some appointments: 1) I think this is a realistic first step toward a more democratic process; 2) I believe that maintaining appointments would ensure that individuals and communities who don't have resources to campaign are represented; and 3) A hybrid model would give voters a chance to have a real say in choosing who makes decisions. Ultimately, the School Board must be a true oversight board that holds the district accountable. I would also consider making these paid positions to provide community members compensation for their time and to ensure a diverse array of opinions on the school board.

3. Compute the cost/benefit ratio for the School District of all proposed KOZ zones before they're approved by Council?

Yes, these associated costs should be shown up-front. KOZ zones can produce unnecessary burden on taxpayers with abated taxes, often with a relatively small return. Knowing the cost benefit ratio up front would help mitigate this issue.

4. Increase direct City funding for the School District? If so, please explain.

Yes, as a member of Council, I would prioritize increasing education funding and would encourage the Mayor to continue giving grants directly from the general fund. Philadelphia's School Board remains one of the only in the state without the capacity to raise tax revenue, making this a critical responsibility for the City. This funding could be directed toward fixing our crumbling and dangerous school infrastructure, as well as improving our resources - such as new textbooks - to improve the quality of our education. Before the most recent reforms to Philadelphia's tax abatement, research from the think tank *Good Jobs First* showed our city sacrificed tens of millions in education funding each year — more than any other large city in the country. We should continue to explore further reforms to the abatement to ensure Philly's school children don't get short changed.

## C. Criminal Justice

**What do you see as the current state of the Criminal Justice System in Philadelphia and what would you do to address any perceived problems/issues?**

The criminal justice system in Philly remains – in many aspects – unjust and unfair. We need more investments and emphasis on retraining police officers, increasing non-police diversions, such as utilizing mental health professionals, and community policing, with an emphasis on increasing police-community relations. With Philadelphia's increase in violent crime, we need holistic solutions. We cannot go back to implementing programs such as unconstitutional stop and frisks. We need to expand our diversion programs and mid-level placements. Our prisons have some of the worst mortality rates among municipalities in the nation. The conditions in prisons are not only dangerous to both prisoners and workers, but also cost taxpayer dollars due to these issues.

Would you back legislation to:

1. Fully end the stop and frisk program?

Yes, because the PPD continues to engage in the practice of racially-motivated, unconstitutional stop and frisks. The 2021 federal court order eliminating the practice for minor offenses is a great step in the right direction of protecting people's rights and dignity. Stop and Frisk has been proven ineffective at reducing criminal behavior or promoting public safety, resulting in finding guns in less than 1% of stops. Philadelphians made their opinion on this clear in the 2020 ballot question, when 83% of voters supported eliminating this unconstitutional practice within our city.

2. Change the Charter to create an oversight board to keep a check on Philadelphia prison conditions?

Yes, absolutely. I would support the legislation introduced by former Councilmember Helen Gym in June 2022 to amend the city charter and replace the current Board of Trustees with an independent Prison Oversight Board. It's crucial that this board has full investigatory power, access to all Department of Prisons facilities, and the budget and staff needed to provide the safe environments and dignity both city employees and incarcerated people deserve.

3. Increase post-release counseling for jobs, housing and other support services?

Yes. This would have multiple benefits, including giving former imprisoned persons the opportunity for work. Investing and expanding re-entry programs like *the Guild*, currently managed by Mural Arts, will serve to both reduce recidivism and increase public safety for all.

4. Bar employers from denying jobs to ex-offenders without a specific job-related basis?

Yes, I was proud to work on the multiple versions of Philadelphia's Fair Chance Hiring law, that bars employers from denying jobs to ex-offenders, except under certain circumstances. As the executive director of the PCHR, I was also charged with enforcing this essential law that gives people a second chance.

#### **D. The Role of Community in the Economic and Political Systems in Philly**

**What do you see as the role of the community in our political and economic systems and what would you do to make it more fair, just, and equitable for all Philadelphians?**

The community has an important role to play in our political and economic systems. Our democracy is built upon community involvement and input, and I believe that community should have input in both our political process and, ultimately, in how we govern when it comes to our economic systems. As a member of Council, my office door will always be open to constituents for feedback and thoughts, and I will use community feedback to help guide my legislative actions. I hope to elevate communities that often don't have a platform in City Hall so that all voices can be heard to ensure more fair, just and equitable outcomes on Council.

Would you back legislation to:

1. Bar or limit privatization of City property and work done by City employees? More specifically are there any circumstances under which you would sell PGW?

Yes, I would be in favor of barring or limiting the privatization of City property and work done by City employees. No, I am not in favor of selling PGW.

2. Move Pension Fund investment decisions in-house?

Yes. We need to avoid high cost investments and those who don't have the best interest of the city in mind.

3. Reform PIDC, the City's main economic development funding agency, so that its Board has a majority of public and community members, rather than Chamber of Commerce appointed members?

Yes. At the minimum, the Mayoral appointments should include members of the public/labor/small business community.

4. Require the City to withdraw subsidies from corporations that fail to provide jobs or other benefits to City residents?

Yes, the City should not subsidize corporations that are not providing Philadelphia workers with jobs or fair benefits. We should create incentives for corporations that are good to workers.

5. Publicly finance City elections?

Yes, because this creates a more fair democratic process and helps lessen the impact of mega donors, the wealthy getting elected and dark money, however I have concerns about funding and decreasing voting - several studies have shown publicly financed elections are generally unpopular.

## **E. Housing**

**What are the root causes of the current Housing Crisis in Philadelphia and how would you address these issues?**

The root cause of our housing crisis in Philadelphia is poverty and a lack of affordable housing. According to the National Low Income Housing Center, a person in Philadelphia would need to earn over \$25.00 per hour to afford a two-bedroom apartment in most areas of our city. PA's minimum wage is only \$7.25. We must create more low-income and affordable housing, expand our subsidies and incentives and work with PHA and HUD to invest more deeply in our city. We also must create more rental housing options for moderate income Philadelphians. Finally, we must work to keep low- and moderate income homeowners in their homes. I would leverage my background and experience as a housing attorney at Community Legal Services to inform all of my work in this space if elected to Council.

Would you back legislation to:

1. Create a rent stabilization program?

Yes.

2. End, limit or curtail Councilmanic prerogative over land disposition?

Yes. I believe it is important to have more input from more Councilmembers on issues of land disposition. Councilmanic prerogative too often benefits developers at the expense of taxpayers and average residents. The use of councilmanic prerogative has huge implications for everything from blight, vacant lots, nepotism for certain developers, gentrification and affordable housing. Reforms are needed.

3. Create or support more affordable housing, both rental and home ownership? Please specify.

Yes, I have spent my entire professional career working to keep low-income people in safe, affordable, and quality housing. I also have advocated for creating more affordable housing. For rental units, I would focus city

funding on “low-income” housing for our lowest income residents and work with various entities to create more “moderate-income” housing (as defined by HUD guidelines). I also would advocate for HUD to redefine Philadelphia county, to include only the city, and not the suburban counties to accurately calculate our Area Median Income (AMI), and make more housing accessible to more low-income people. I also am in favor of permanent rental assistance to expand on the already approved funds from Council allocated over the next two years. Finally, I support policies that would enable more proactive code enforcement to take on illegal landlords and substandard rentals.

In addition, Philadelphia is a city of many low-income homeowners, and often the most affordable housing option is the home they are in. We need to expand programs that allow people to remain in their homes from targeted property tax relief, increased access to subsidized home repair programs, to support for the foreclosure diversion and tangled titles programs. We also need to expand our first time homebuyer assistance grants.

4. What would you do to curtail or limit the effects of gentrification in our neighborhoods that is displacing long term and low-income residents?

I would implement the ideas in my rent stabilization program that includes homestead-like policies, including expanding the LOOP real estate tax program to include owners who agree to stabilize their rents. I also would ensure the city does extensive research and outreach to neighbors in areas that will face gentrification, to ensure long-term homeowners know the real value of their homes, know their rights, and are protected against predatory purchasers. Finally, I would help to organize the community so that when the neighborhood starts to change, we help to strengthen the community, avoid or ease inter-group conflicts, and ensure long-term residents have a voice.

## **F. Environmental Justice**

### **What are the major Environmental issues in Philadelphia and what would you do to address them?**

We know the climate crisis is already here — and so we must respond with urgency. We saw it when Hurricane Ida flooded 676 in September of 2021, and when 100+ Philadelphia schools were forced to close due to extreme temperatures in June of 2022. To me, our response starts with a municipal Green New Deal — that covers everything from reenvisioning the future of PGW, to investing in our legacy transit network to make it a reliable and affordable option for every family, to tapping into strong union labor to retrofit our schools and ensure the climate crisis doesn’t cost our kids hours in school, to ensuring every community has access to green space. Few issues are as transparently intersectional as environmental justice: supporting public safety, education, accessibility, and so much more.

But we know the burdens of this crisis don’t fall on every community evenly, and that’s why I’m committed to advancing environmental justice through Council. We’re a city where environmental racism is baked into our city from decades of discriminatory policies, especially historic redlining, forcing harmful industrial projects to heavily concentrate within communities of color and low-income neighborhoods. I’d proudly support the Community Health Act introduced in February 2022, taking on environmental racism by mapping environmental justice communities in this city, looking at pollution in context, and empowering the city to better protect the communities who have borne the brunt of environmental racism for decades.

Please answer the following specific questions:

1. Would you use the City’s power of the purse to prevent SEPTA from continuing to build and use natural-gas fueled power plants in the City?

Yes.

2. What will you do to support and promote the use of solar and other renewable energy sources in the City?

I support using my office to interface with the largest actors in the city contributing to climate change – such as PGW which currently accounts for almost 1/5 of the City’s carbon emissions – and create policy solutions that will give them an attainable off-ramp to neutrality. It would be important, for example, to work with PGW to encourage them to move beyond research and pilot alternative sources of energy like geothermal.

3. Do you support a plan for City government or the entire City to be fossil-free by a particular date? If so, how would you accomplish that goal?

I support the City’s current commitment to decarbonize by 2050, but as a member of Council I’d push for a more truncated timeline to achieve neutrality by 2035. I support our municipal government working with organized labor to find opportunities to create union jobs while revamping our City’s energy grid. Unions and organized labor should be the engine for our transition to a carbon neutral future. These union jobs must include a diverse workforce, and I support efforts to continue to diversify all unions in Philadelphia, including the Building Trades. We also need to make SEPTA the 21st Century public transit service it can be. That means working with state leaders on funding solutions and interfacing with constituents to make SEPTA more rider-friendly. Reducing or eliminating SEPTA fares in Philadelphia could be part of this solution. I would also ensure my office is in frequent contact with the City’s newly created Chief Resilience Officer to communicate challenges and opportunities that we hear via feedback from constituents.

## **G. Health Care**

**What can the City do to provide and support adequate and affordable health care for its residents?**

The pandemic made it clear how essential public health centers are – we need to increase our capacity to care for our residents. The City should expand public health centers to be urgent care centers as well. A start would be a pilot program to test this. We can also do a better job of publicizing the availability of healthcare centers as well as health priorities in immigrant communities.

Specially answer the following question:

1. Would you support the construction of a City-owned Northeast Health Center?

Yes, there is a gap in public health centers in this area which includes growing communities, specifically immigrant communities, that deserve service.

## **H. Taxes**

**Would is your plan for a fair, just and equitable taxing structure for the City of Philadelphia, addressing specifically your position on real estate, corporate, and individual taxing rates?**

It has been over a decade since the city convened a task force to review our city’s tax structure. I support calls to establish a new Commission on Tax Equity and Growth to ensure economic growth is both equitable and inclusive. Outdated notions, especially that tax cuts and giveaways are the only means to spark economic growth, have been undermined by both research and experience.

Specifically answer the following:

1. Would you increase taxes if the programs you wish to fund cannot otherwise be paid for?

We need to holistically look at our tax structure to make sure our tax burden is handled

equitably, so people who can afford the least, carry the least burden. If there are programs in need of funding that are priorities, I will work with my fellow councilmembers to find funding sources and formulas that work.

2. Which taxes would you propose raising?

Again, we need to holistically look at our tax structure, but I would propose further reforms to the 10-year tax abatement, to start.

## **I. General Statement**

Use this space to provide any further information that you would like us to consider about your candidacy, not covered by the questions above.

I've spent my entire career fighting for social justice and equity for Philadelphia's most vulnerable communities. I know how to deliver the kind of lasting, community-led change that gives everyone the opportunity to thrive. Philadelphia is an incredible city, and we have so much potential to be the best. But, I look around and see what most of us here in Philadelphia see – our city government isn't working for us. And it's holding us back. I believe for Philly to solve our most pressing issues like the lingering effects of the pandemic, deepening poverty, a worsening housing crisis, a broken education system, and unrelenting gun violence, we need someone with vision, a proven track record, and strong relationships, to get things done. I'm running for City Council at-large because I know we can overcome these challenges. I believe every person in our city deserves the best we have to offer. It's out there for us if we do the work-----, and I've spent my entire career doing the work.