



RAQUEL CASTAÑEDA-LOPEZ DISTRICT 6 CANDIDATE

QUESTION: Detroit suffers from very high rates of asthma, cancer, and lead poisoning, all influenced by our heavily polluted environment. These problems impact children's ability to learn and adults' ability to work. What would you, as an elected official, do to improve Detroit's environment?

ANSWER: Environmental health problems plague District 6, with the District containing some of the most polluted zip codes in the Midwest. My goal is to mitigate these problems through the following strategies:

- Ensure that companies such as Marathon, the Detroit Salt Mining Company and other large industries in the District are in compliance with existing ordinances.
- Limit the amount of trucks driving in residential communities in the District by working with MDOT to re-route traffic.
- Aggressively pursue illegal dumping in the District and ensure violators are charged

by enforcing local ordinances and creating stricter ones.

- Convert empty lots into community spaces and urban gardens to provide access to healthy food and increase tree canopy to improve air quality.
- Increase education and disseminate information about recycling and provide greater access to recycling facilities.
- Increase funding to the City's Lead Abatement program for families in the city.
- Work with community leaders and churches to identify the most dangerous structures in their communities and advocate for their removal.
- Partner with local health clinics to inform residents about the symptoms and causes of asthma.

Q: How would you, as an elected official, be an advocate for resident efforts to improve neighborhood quality of life?

A: As a lifelong resident of the District who grew up in poverty, I understand the

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challenges that most of the families in the District face. As I've gone door knocking throughout the District I have listened to residents speak about their quality of life. Residents' top concerns are related to vacant lots and uncut grass, abandoned houses and broken street lights. Addressing these matters will be my top priority on city council. I have met community leaders, block clubs and community organizations doing work around these issues and will partner with these groups as a public official.

My hope is to have a mobile office which visits communities in the district on a bi-weekly basis, helping residents cut through the red tape and bureaucracy to increase access to resources and services.

Q: In the interests of environmental justice, how would you work to alleviate disproportionate environmental burdens in the city?

A: I am committed to working with civic, city and state leaders to advocate for policies that promote environmental justice and increase the quality of life in our communities. Having worked with former Majority Floor Leader Steve Tobocman and State Representative Rashida Tlaib, I understand what it takes to improve our neighborhoods. I am also a strong believer in partnering with residents to create community benefits agreements that mitigate environmental health issues.

In addition, awareness and education play a key role in a community's ability to understand and mobilize around these issues. As such, I will work with residents to make sure they understand that environmental health issues impact the entire District and city, not just certain zip codes.

Q: The City needs to be an advocate for higher environmental standards. If you are elected, how do you envision using the Detroit Environmental Agenda as a tool to create policies that improve the city's environment?

A: My first step would be to reach out to the leadership team that created the Detroit Environmental Agenda (DEA). I am by no means an expert in this field and believe it's important to reach out to the leaders in the field to create sound policy. I would work in partnership with the DEA to move the agenda forward, championing issues such as engaging youth and residents in becoming part of the solution and supporting community leadership in local development.

Read the full Detroit Environmental Agenda report at www.detroitenv.org.

It's time to act. Inform your vote for the **Tuesday, November 5, 2013** general elections.

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