

RoxVote Coalition DISTRICT 7 CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE



CORNELL D. MILLS

CITY SERVICES/INFORMATION SHARING

How would you use your office to ensure that residents of all the neighborhoods of Boston have equal access to basic city services and to information regarding City-sponsored programs and activities?

I would continue advocate aggressively for equity and parity in the distribution of city resources. I would work with colleagues and the city bureaucracy where able, collaborate and compromise when possible, advocate and agitate when necessary. I would make the case for distribution of resources based on need and incidence in population. It's a policy used on state level with health services and the same should be done for D7. I would use my negotiating and advocacy skills that I've drawn on in my business experience. If the residents of D7 stand with me, I will stand for them. I'm a person who believes its ok to disagree with your colleagues and the city and it doesn't make you ineffective. I have long term relationships and connections with those I would need to work with but I don't owe any of them anything but mutual respect. I would never be unclear about who I work for.

HOUSING As City Councilor, what specific steps would you take to address the variety of housing issues in District 7, such as homelessness, foreclosures, and housing affordability?

I currently operate a real estate business in Boston and have involuntarily transitioned to a practice heavily focused on foreclosure prevention. I've learned a lot and would bring those remedies to my representation of D7. I have a plan to address housing issues. (1) Continue to do massive educating and facilitating information on existing resources to residents of D7. Both the city and numerous non-profit financial institutions have substantial resources and pools of money to prevent foreclosure. I've conducted free foreclosure prevention workshops for nonprofits and I would continue to use the monthly D7 forums as done by Councilor Turner to bring information to the District. I would offer plan to assess each foreclosure done in Suffolk County a fee, proceeds of which would be used to supplement and support both homeowners fighting foreclosure and tenants who stand to lose housing as result of foreclosure. I have proposal to create buy down mortgage program for 1st time urban homebuyers. I think we can do better with abandoned properties and create real and important job opportunities for the unemployed and youth.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES How would you use your office to create more opportunities for young people in District 7?

By advocating for the same kinds of relief we've fought so long and hard for in CORI for adults to be afforded juveniles and youth in D7. Also, I would propose substantial increases in job opportunities from the many nonprofit organizations and institutions which enjoy tax exempt status and presently operate under the PILOT Agreement with the city. Those Agreements are most often negotiated out of the public eye and with little transparency. Also, there are numerous arts and sports institutions in Boston which should be monitored the same way we do others re: Boston Jobs and business contracting goals. I would work to expand an existing high school program in Boston to schools such as Burke, English, Madison, O'Bryant etc. to create school/alumni mentoring programs. I would use call on these school alumni networks as well as the church network to join with existing social service organizations to provide a way to fill the void.

PUBLIC SAFETY What new steps would you advocate for to improve current crime and violence prevention strategies?

1. Do assessment of work other councilors are presently undertaking.
2. Gather all those who presently receive resources/funding, (mostly law enforcement and faith based organizations) to the table to present results of funded activity. Establish measurable. Those who cannot produce results would be encouraged to turn money back so that it can be granted to those who actually do the lion's share of the effective work, most often with little or no resource and support. We did this right once. The 90's Boston Miracle was born of a wide collaboration between community, law enforcement, elected officials, church, business, city and state agencies. We had the largest precipitous drop in violent crime in the nation. We then took resources and gave them to law enforcement and selected faith based organizations. We now face steady increase in crime/violence.
3. I would facilitate the review, tighten and educate D7 residents of present policies to support and protect witnesses to crime. Educate about difference between being a 'snitch' and a 'witness'. Continue to press more collaboration between community and police to bridge divides that often discourage the kind of cooperation we must have to be successful in prosecuting crime.

EDUCATION Please identify the major challenge facing Boston schools and describe what you would do to address this challenge.

1. Single biggest challenge is the lack of representation in the decision making body politic of those who are completely beholden to the students in the system.
2. Upgrading the level of education and providing necessary resources to accomplish such not the priority because the constant budget challenges seem to always take priority. I would continue to work with those in collaboration to challenge this imbalance. It seems once again that parents in D7 will need resort to the courts for remedy.

JOBS What steps will you take to make sure the City enforces the Boston Residents Jobs Policy which is designed to increase employment opportunities for Boston residents, workers of color, and women on City of Boston-funded construction projects?

Transparency, transparency! Require submission of monitoring reports be submitted to record on monthly basis. Councilors best energy should be used to establish/publicize the goals are. I think monitors independent of city should be utilized. Also, we can't ignore the critical importance of contracting policy as well. Minority, women-owned, local businesses hire local. Supporting them makes good sense.