

Dorchester Reporter

"The News and Values Around the Neighborhood"

2023 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: BACKGROUND

1. What is your name, age, place of birth and present address?

Ricardo Arroyo, 35, Hyde Park, 106 Faraday St.

2. What is your present occupation? Also, please note any past employment that may be relevant to your candidacy.

Incumbent Boston City Councilor District 5, Public Defender

3. Please detail your personal educational background and achievements.

Boston Public Schools, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Loyola University Chicago School of Law

4. Please list some of your affiliations with non-profits, civic associations, and political groups.

Member of NAACP, former member National Lawyers Guild, member of Ward 18 Committee

5. What in your experience to date will most help you to be an effective leader?

I have a proven track record of creating policies and shepherding policies through the legislative process and to fruition where they benefit Boston and District 5.

6. What are the three accomplishments you're most proud of?

Racism as a Public Health Crisis Declaration, creation of the Office of Police Accountability and Transparency, my work as Government Operations Chair.

7. Are you a member of a union?

No

8. Please list any endorsements to date.

West Rox/Roslindale Progressives & State Rep. Russell Holmes

Section 2: POLITICS & ELECTIONS

1. What is your party affiliation and how would you characterize your political ideology?

Democrat and Progressive

2. Please name up to three (and at least one) of your political role models? Please feel free to explain your choices.

Felix D. Arroyo, my father and a hero to me, and Mel King a true pioneer.

3. Are you in favor of term limits for the seat you are seeking? If so, how many terms?

No

4. What would you do to increase voter turnout in the city of Boston? Do you favor same-day voter registration or lowering the voting age to 16? Do you favor mail-in voting? Would you support combining municipal and state/federal elections into even numbered years to increase turnout in municipal elections?

Same day voting and same day registration would be a good start. I voted to lower voting age to 16 and I have pushed for and support mail-in voting.

Section 3: ISSUES & PRIORITIES

1. What is your top priority if elected?

Housing

2. How will you approach the issue of gun violence in our communities?

As a former Public Defender I understand that this is a multifaceted issue and I have advocated for more community resources and investment into youth jobs, youth programming, and mental health supports.

3. Is there a specific city agency you see as in need of urgent reform? If so, please explain.

The Boston Police Department needs reform in how we handle the overtime system, civilianizing details, and ensuring that we aren't overburdening our police officers by having them answer calls better handled by social workers and mental health experts.

4. What is your position on residency, i.e. requiring people hired by the municipal government to live in the city of Boston?

I support residency.

5. Do you favor a return to an elected School Committee? Please explain.

Yes and I was the original sponsor of the Home Rule Petition that would have accomplished this.

6. Boston doesn't have enough housing to meet the demand. Separately, the Wu administration wants to see a return of the city's population to 800,000. What is your assessment of this target — and what would your office do to balance growth with the concerns that many have about displacement in neighborhoods like Dorchester and Mattapan?

As the Councilor I am aware that Boston is experiencing a housing crisis and that addressing that crisis requires building more housing. As Councilor development seeking my support has had to demonstrate community benefit and a commitment to affordable housing far higher than the 13% IDP required by the city. This administration is pushing for 17% IDP which I support and as Councilor I have requested and have received commitments at or over 20% for projects in the district. My hope is that ensuring all development considers where it is being built, that there is a good mix of homeownership and rental units, and that affordable housing is included on site lessens displacement dramatically.

7. What is your position on rent control?

I support it, voted for it, and led it through the Boston City Council as Chair of Government Operations.

9. What is your position on the reforms the Wu administration is undertaking, aimed at the zoning code and the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA)?

I support them.

10. What do you think are the lessons learned from the Covid pandemic, and what would you advocate to change in city health policy as a result of the lessons learned?

We need more access to health care which is why as Councilor I fought for and received 2 million dollars to establish the first ever Community Health Center in Hyde Park.

11. What is your assessment of the Wu administration's overall performance? Please offer a letter grade or pass/fail as part of your answer.

Pass, I agree with much more of what Mayor Wu has done than I don't. She has led on rent stabilization, much needed environmental reforms, and is leading on reforming the BPDA all things I support. We have, however, disagreed on the need for an elected school committee and reallocating funding from the Boston Police Department to social services and programs that help reduce the impacts of poverty which is the root cause of most crime in our city.

12. The Red Line and several commuter rail lines run through Dorchester and Mattapan. How will you advocate for better service and conditions on public transit?

I believe Boston should have a permanent representative on the MBTA Fiscal Control Board and have also used my position to advocate for lower fares and more access. I have also voted for and support free bus lines which currently are used by the district.

13. What would you do to make Dorchester Avenue and Blue Hill Avenue better roadways?

I believe that Blue Hill Avenue is a crucial artery for Mattapan and the city as a whole and I support improving it with a redesign that centers the community that lives there and uses the busses and streets every day. For me that means a redesign that improves the experience of those who use public transportation, drive, and the residents who live adjacent to and on Blue Hill Avenue.

14. What are your plans to reorient our neighborhoods to center around pedestrians and bikers?

I support and have pushed for raised pedestrian crosswalks and other engineering changes to improve safety such as protected bike lanes. Our streets belong to all of us and should serve us all.

15. When not on the campaign trail, how do you unwind?

That time is reserved for my partner Jennifer and our two Yorkies, Penny and Giddy. They provide a lot of the love and support that I need to do this work.

Thank you for participating in the Dorchester Reporter questionnaire. Please send the completed document as a PDF or WordDoc to newseditor@dotnews.com by Friday, Aug. 18, 2023.