

# 2017 DFL Minneapolis Mayoral Candidate Forum

March 30, 2017

On March 30, 2017, the Law Democrats hosted a DFL Minneapolis mayoral candidate forum at the University of Minnesota Law School. All six announced DFL candidates attended. This included MN Rep. **Raymond Dehn**, Councilman **Jacob Frey**, business leader **Tom Hoch**, Mayor **Betsy Hodges**, attorney **Nekima Levy-Pounds**, and filmmaker **Aswar Rahman**. The forum was moderated by **Joshua Preston** ('19).

A video of the forum can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDjyNVVP0nU>.

*This transcription was based on an audio file and has not, by the moderator, been closely reviewed for accuracy. Therefore, it is suggested that readers verify specific language by comparing it to the video of the forum.*

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## TRANSCRIPT

**Moderator:** Good morning.

Before we start today's Minneapolis Mayoral Candidate Forum, I'd like to begin with an opening remarks.

Travel bans, deportation raids, disregard for climate change, the dog whistling of law-and-order, attacks on women's reproductive health, disdain for the poor in our list, well, of the list of problems facing our country as a whole goes on and on.

But we should not hide from the fact that there's much to be worried about on the national level. But as we look up to the congress, the presidency and the federal court, we must not do so at the expense of what exists around us. For on a day-to-day basis we will work and operate here on the local level. It is after all through our city's ordinances that we may safely ride a bicycle on our streets, or an access to affordable housing or a living wage. It's by our city's tax and budget priorities whether we have green space or equally important to us audience apparently on the micro rural lease. It's here on the local level where we can shake policing priorities and training to ensure that drug lords don't become a club we smash over the heads of teenagers or the people of color must bear for their own safety when they themselves reach out for help.

All of these, from bicycles to police brutality, are within the influence of we citizenry and within the control of our elected local leaders. So whether it's on the national level or a threat to the well-being of our communities, let us resist. The works we're likely to have in the coming years, the DFL council, and the DFL mayor, let us do more, let thrive and let Minneapolis be the envy of the nation.

The Law Democrats are very lucky and honored to host today's forum. Here we have before us, six candidates for the DFL party endorsement for Minneapolis mayor. Each comes from a different background and wealth of experience and each is here to offer a vision of what this city could be.

For those of you who are new to Minneapolis and planning on making this city your home, I'll remind you that Minneapolis utilizes ranked choice voting. So as we go through this forum and you say, "Gosh! I only have to pick on." Well, the truth is, you don't have to. With ranked choice voting, you can rank your first, second and third preferences. From my understanding, we have some representatives from Faribault, Minnesota here, who can speak to ranked choice voting if you have any questions.

In terms of today's format, candidates will have 2 minutes to introduce themselves and explain why they're running for office. Afterwards, I'll ask a series of pre-written questions from the Law Democrats general nature touching upon social justice and economic issues current to Minneapolis. Each candidate will then have two minutes to respond. If a candidate is directly invoked or attacked or there's a significant inferences of who's being referenced, they will be allowed a 15-second re-battle.

Finally, for the second half of this forum, we'll open questions out to the

audience. And what we have are some note cards that I believe have already been passed around. You have an opportunity to write your question on them. And when you're done, you can fold it up and we'll have a volunteer from the Law Democrats go around and collect it.

When we finally near the end of our time here today, we'll allow each candidate closing remarks. Finally, because this has to be said, please hold your applause until the end out of respect for all the candidates. So with all of these said, I want to open this up now for an opportunity for our candidates to introduce themselves and explain why they're running for office. Each of them will have 2 minutes. Council Member Frey.

**Jacob Frey:**

Well, first, thank you so much to the University of Minnesota Law School Democrats for having us. I think the forum and the debate is essential for democracy. I really appreciate you guys for organizing, I know, it's no short task especially while you're simultaneously in law school. My name is Jacob Frey, and I fell in love with the city of Minneapolis. I ran at the Twin Cities Marathon while I was in law school and the day after graduating, I decided, "Hey! I'm moving out to Minneapolis to start my life."

What I found was an engaged activist community that was fully capable of enacting the change they envision. I found the city that through the right leadership, the vision could be very much like a big, old, neighborhood. I found a place that through the right leadership we can make sure that we're a beacon of opportunity and inclusivity for every single person in the city. And what I found was a city that was content on me and pretty good in the upper mid west. We could be world-class. And I still believe it today.

Notwithstanding what's happening in the state is, the federal legislation, notwithstanding the grid lock in the Donald Trump presidency, we still can be world-class today. That is very visible and present there, with a very clear vision to make it all happen. We can make sure that every single person has the ability to live in a great city; that means affordable housing. And by the way, we've got major crisis right now. We can end homelessness. We can be amongst the greatest cities in the entire world. We can. Right now, the cities really are the laboratory of democracy. And while stuff stalls at the state and the federal legislature, while we have we have our republican there, here in Minneapolis, we can do great work that truly helps people.

So I'm asking for your support, I'm asking for your vote and I can't tell you how much I appreciate who put this forum on.

**Moderator:** Mayor Hodges?

**Betsy Hodges:** Well, hello everybody. I'm delighted to be here. I used to work for the Minnesota Justice Foundation. So it's delightful to be back at the law school. I ran on a platform four years ago of making sure that this instance right today is here if you don't do enough, people don't realizing anything or so. Of our growth, making sure that we are bringing more people to Minneapolis, that we are making it easier for people to invest in Minneapolis now we should turn that growth 'cause it's so important for our future and we're such a great city why wouldn't people want being here.

And I ran on a platform of equity because we are an extraordinary city that is 100% true. It is also 100% true that we are a city that faces significant challenges especially with the issues with race and equity. And I ran on that platform. And it was a little bit of a dear because there are a lot people who are uncomfortable when you name the challenges that we face as a community. More comfortable with just naming great things about us. But I ran on that platform and been busy doing what I said I would do. We're getting the basics right, structurally balanced budget, \$800-million parks and streets agreement, insurances agreement, moving the center of gravity on public safety away from just one enforcement to balance, partnership between community and law enforcement because that's how we saved our annual trust at the same time.

And now, we have President Trump. And we are being tested, and we get to ask ourselves, did we mean it four years ago when we said we wanted to be one Minneapolis? And we want to come together? And that requires transformational leadership, getting down in there, fighting through the resistance, day after day, making sure we get things done. And now, we have workforce programs that we didn't have before. We have leasing that we didn't have before and we are doing better than ever, and we get to continue to do that. I offer myself as that kind of transformational leader and I ask for your support.

**Moderator:** Representative Dehn?

**Raymond Dehn:** First of all, I want to thank you all for being here today. It's a typical spring day in Minnesota. I'm state representative Raymond Dehn, I represent District 59B in state house. And that district includes most of downtown Minneapolis, the southern part of North Minneapolis. It's good to be back here at University of Minnesota. I went to school here. To try to change the world, I studied Architecture as an undergraduate and a graduate student. And I found myself several years after, pursuing architecture to actually running for a public office.

Now, so I would be talking about a non-typical individual of the city that would run for public office. Some of you may know my history. I grew up in poverty. I developed an addiction early on during high school. Later, I was convicted of a felony, served at the end only 7 months, and was able to get out, to go to drug treatment. I know what it feels like to struggle. I was also fortunate that in 1982 that I received a pardon from the state of Minnesota. So this is as if I've never committed a crime at all in my life.

I decided to run for public office originally because I thought it was important to have a conversation about our criminal justice system. And I wanted to be someone who could speak to it, not as someone who's typically thought of when we think of the criminal justice system but someone nonetheless that I've done things that were similar with. After living on the other side for twenty years, it has become really apparent to me, it came out previously that one of the advantages I have in the system is that I was white. So every day, I prayed that the state capital will try to change things to make sure to focus on the current deal and I look forward to hearing that not only in the several months but also at the city level and having a mayor that actually speaks to these issues. Thank you.

**Moderator:** Mr. Rahman?

**Aswar Rahman:** By the way, my name is Aswar Rahman and my background is my family is based in Bangladesh. That's for the start. We lived a very comfortable life there but we left because my mother knew that we needed the best education possible we can get so we came here and immediately she started her own business and my sisters started to help the business. I'm a filmmaker in the US and I do a couple of other things.

But responsibility that I take most dear my heart is that of racism. And as a member of the family that has been in Minneapolis. So when the DFL, when we started this campaign, the main motivation was to look at the two main issues that the mayor actually has responsibility – which is the budget and the police. And we look at our city over the past four years. Those are the two places where we actually have the biggest shortcomings in the city both violent crime and acts of terrorism by double digits in the past two years long. So now that we live in a less safe, less prosperous as it is less affordable. And so, when we look into these things as somebody who's a member of the City of Minneapolis, somebody whose family has found a place to build what we want to build in this world, is instantly unacceptable.

So I want to convince you tonight or today, I want to convince you that this is the year that we select a mayor over the next four in the hope of having a more safe,

and more prosperous city and that only comes with actual positive decisions that aren't driven by larger sense of government. We're going to go for real, tangible solutions to these problems – our rising crime rate, our rising, unnecessarily rising property tax rate and the operations that go along that we'll be discussed later on or tomorrow. Thank you so much for this. Thank you so much.

**Moderator:** Nekima Levy-Pounds?

**Levy-Pounds:** Good afternoon. I want to thank the Law of Dems for hosting this and all of you for being here. The reason that I am running for mayor is simple. I'm sick and tired of the status quo. As some of you may know, I was a law professor at the University of St. Thomas for 13 years, rose up to ranks, was a full professor of law and had tenure. But at some point, during my journey as a law professor, I began to go outside of the academe, and some of the safety nets that we have has lawyers and budding lawyers to see what was happening on the branches of our community. I remember being very surprised and dismayed when I went into some of our poorest neighborhoods and I saw issues such as economic injustice. I saw issues such as a lack of affordable housing and high rates of homelessness that typically amongst young people. I also witnessed firsthand police violence happening. And we've reported those things happening. And instead, legal issues would fall on their fears.

So during my time with St. Thomas, I went to civil rights legal clinic where I took my law students outside of St. Thomas to go into the halls of government at the local county and estate level to advocate for change. We were able to push for some policy changes and some changes to the law but the sad part is that the changes were very slow and incremental, not because those in positions and power could not affect change but because they did not have the political will to do so.

So I got tired of standing outside the doors of government, knocking on doors, conducting research, bringing forward sensible solutions and having those things fall on their fears. So I said, if I am serious about justice, about prosperity for all, then I need to prove it. So I left my position at St. Thomas, I put my hat in the ring, to become your next mayor of the city of Minneapolis.

**Tom Hoch:** Okay, thank you and good afternoon. Thank you for hosting us here today. My name is Tom Hoch, and I am a lifelong resident of the City of Minneapolis. I grew up here, I went to school here, and like couple of other people here, I'm a lawyer. But please don't poke that against me, I'm not competing with you. Okay.

Over the course of my time here, I've had a tremendous opportunity not just

practice long, I've had the opportunity to complete economic development and efforts in our city, I've been put housing administrator, I've founded a non-profit that created jobs and took care of revitalizing a big portion of our downtown. And I think I can bring more of that to the office of mayor.

Right now, I'm concerned about the prosperity of our city. We have no vitality plan. We look around and the city companies are facing strong headwinds, targeting, in essence their employees, [15:50], 2500 in the past couple of years and these are companies that we have relied on historically. We need to have a vitality plan. We need to grow businesses here. Why are we not aspiring to develop that Best Fortune 500 Company? Or not? Or not, [16:06] companies. Our safety is problematic. We are risking individuals for committing or conspiring crimes — rape, murder, everyday to be solved. And finally, we need to get a hand on the affordable housing crisis. We've lost 5,000 units in the last 10 years. And we need to go forward and address how we are going to solve that problem in the future. Thank you.

**Moderator:** Thank you everyone. I want to know then, try to speak here on what we're going to do is just make sure everyone gets an opportunity to speak first at least once. This first question goes to Mayor Hodges and we'll work our way down with each successive question.

So the first question which was generated from the Law of Democrats is, "Here, we here, at The University of Minnesota Law School, they were here at this institution, the student body here includes students from many cities, many states. So, what is one policy from another city that you believe is worth bringing here to Minneapolis?"

**Betsy Hodges:** Well, that's a great question because part of our strength as a city is we get to export a lot of our ideas. I know that how important it is to share the good stuff we're doing but I also has spent time learning from other mayors, let's bring information. And one of the things that we have done that I think is so important is that we followed lead from other cities, we did it before as we are having parks and streets policy. One of the things I've done as mayor is leader revolution and complete street redesign because when it comes to our transit and transportation, we need to make sure that our city is ready for everybody, especially communities that historically have been left behind. And then last, our transportation policy includes biking, includes walking, includes transit; we are leading communities behind. And so, I appointed a great new public works director who has designed it and she did this well in so many cities. We have public works command division in our public works department to do this work intentionally. And we have put again 800-million dollars into neighborhood parks

and streets, 600 thousand of that for our streets to make sure that we can actually do the redesign. Because it's important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century city to focus on places where they can live without a car, where they can have car rides and we have to make that transit but it's our entire infrastructure. We're doing that for the entire city, we're not leaving people behind. And other cities have paved the way for that. And so, I've talked to mayors all across the country, "What is it that you've done? What have you done best?" And borrow some of their ideas.

**Moderator:** Representative Dehn?

**Raymond Dehn:** Thank you. So when I think about what we can learn from other cities isn't just always positive. If you know what's happening in Oakland right now, that city is quickly becoming unaffordable for people that have lived there in the last couple of decades. So we can look to cities and what they're not doing right. And we can sort of hedge in the opposite direction that they've been going. As the mayor stated, I think that when we look at things, we're on transitory development in how cities are growing around transit, transit development. [19:27] is a great example of how to do that; you create zones around the actual transits and you create opportunities for that growth to then take place, copy it, with some parameters on what that looks; it's important that we look at these areas and we make sure that they're not only mixed-use areas, but they are also mixed-income areas so that people across our economic spectrums are able to live there. Those are just a few of the things. I'm going to defer my time to other folks, which isn't usually something I do, but I will see, hopefully our state can learn from other states and we can actually get to the point where we totally [20:06-11].

**Aswar Rahman:** The topic that comes to my mind when we think about what we can learn from other states, the city that comes to my mind is Kalamazoo, Michigan. In Kalamazoo, they have probably the most progressive way of making sure that every single person in the city has access to higher education. So what I've seen in Minneapolis is that we, in minorities in the south makeup 40% of population, we have 17% of the jobs in the City of Minneapolis. We should be alarmed by an idea like that. And I think the root of it is that we're not given enough opportunities to arise ahead in the city by our economic leader. One of the few ways we can do that is by, anyways it's like Kalamazoo or the other cities that have taken a strong step forward in making sure that the exact occasion is to find programs like other cities used to power youth program, which currently doesn't have to see but I think anymore near the level of support issues here. Our view essentially is a program to make sure that something kept through the city without debt. And this is crucial and then my friends circle, I have friends who left high school, because they realized that they could not perceivably gain a higher education. The way things are set and done. I think the responsibility of a



city government is to make sure that every single person in the city has an opportunity to let them want to live in the city. One thing, a great thing we can do that is social stratification.

Another example and I am not going to name the city itself because it's the capital...I think it's the capital of Iceland. I think it's pronounced like Reykjavik, Reykjavik.

**Betsy Hodges:** Reykjavik.

**Aswar Rahman:** Reykjavik. There you go. All right. Reykjavik. That's an example of a city that in a span of 10-15 years has been able to cut down their specific problem with their youth was alcohol usage, that incredible alcohol use. Within ten years, they've concentrated their investment into youth programs. They were able to cut that number down in single digits and now it's almost a hundred persons being brought on streets, which is a great thing. There you go.

And I think something similar to that approach within the area in our city especially among Minneapolis and the quarters of east, southeast Minneapolis or south Minneapolis, financial district. But we need stronger investment in youth programs; so those two things are, I think we have something to learn very well from the cities both here and abroad.

**Levy-Pounds:** We've heard some great examples from our colleagues of places that are doing things well around the country. I think that it is important to note that those changes such as the transit developments and coordination would not have happened without the power of people behind it; that's why they got community benefits agreements to make sure the voices of people we're heard. Similarly, the city that comes to mind for me is the City of Seattle that puts very strongly, for fifteen now, so that's \$15 an hour with no ticket penalty, which primarily impacts, low wage workers, workers of the collar, single moms, and those who struggled into making ends meet.

In the City of Minneapolis, we have seen people rise up over the last couple of years to demand a minimum of \$15 an hour minimum wage that would be faced hand depending upon the size of the business in over period of years. That to me is one of our most important policy decisions that we can make. Now, we know that there are people who do not think that it's feasible to pay people \$15 an hour, but what we need to recognize is that the situation we're in right now is not feasible and is not sustainable; where people are going to work for \$9 something like minimum wage and they cannot put food on the table. They cannot afford to remain to live in the City of Minneapolis; it impacts their housing situation,

which impacts their children's ability to go to school and to be able to learn. And those are our future workers. So it's time for us to look to places like Seattle and to make a decision that we're going to do the right thing in the city. And we're 68% of voters support for the \$15 an hour minimum wage.

**Tom Hoch:**

I'm really glad that you asked that question because when we look at prosperity and vitality plan, everything that we've talked about up here is not possible if we don't have jobs because jobs pay your property taxes, they are what pay your rent, they are what pay your mortgage fees. And none of that is possible if you don't have a job and that's why I'm focusing on that. When we look around the country and see what other cities are doing, we need to sit up and take note because there are a lot of cities that are now playing on national stage. Austin, you probably all figured, familiar with South by Southwest; started as a live music festival and now it has grown into something much, much bigger. It is about art, design. Creative thought. And what has happened is it created vibe and attraction to Austin and now Google is there, Apple declared. Why? Because of South by Southwest. That's all around the country. Bolder, bolder, they are positioning themselves as the natural organic food location for startup businesses. We could learn from that. We could learn to organize education, labor, entrepreneurs, venture capitals, all together to make that art into something like that or our own version of it. And I wonder, I look at older and I'm like, where's the bright basket in the middle of the district? For God's sake. Why are we not the food capital? So we look around other cities that are doing like Indianapolis, technology, they've attracted sales force and NGOs that are growing their economy in that way so that everybody who's there can have a job. They're baking a bigger pie rather than slicing the pie into thinner slices.

**Moderator:**

Thank you. In terms of looking at what other cities are...

**Jacob Frey:**

Do what you have to do.

**Moderator:**

Council Member Frey.

**Jacob Frey:**

Okay. So I'll look to a couple of cities. First, I'll look to Utah. Utah did something that is seemingly extraordinary but really not so much. They said, "You know what? We've got a homeless population and we are going to give them homes, we're going to give them homes and I tell you what, it's worth that." Here's what we know, in Minneapolis we know that 70-80% of our homeless population is working, they are working, but they can't make up that gap between the cost of a homeless shelter and the cost of our deepest affordable housing in the city. And so what Utah did is they said, "You know what? We're going to build and retain housing to make sure that people who are homeless can have that

foundation from which they can rise. And so they can have that foundation from which they can rise. And you know, if they were able to do that, I'll tell you what they need; it's a message to the rest of the country that we actually do care about our homeless population. And we do and I'll give you the second one. In Philadelphia, which is where I went to law school. I worked towards the end of my 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the court, in city hall. And what they ultimately found at that time, there were mortgage foreclosure, was that they need to be mediated, they need to have mandatory mediation for foreclosure, mandatory mediation for foreclosures. And what that enabled is it enabled people to come in and just tell their stories to their banks. And what they found is not only that this enabled people to stay in their homes but actually the banks actually have more money. Do believe me or not because they were able to find solutions, they were rules that they can look. I had that horrible story. My wife had cancer. I was laid off for work but come November, come December, I own this cloud company. And we're going to make a deal with the bank. In fact, I can pay you double or triple whatever the principal amount is for those months. But they were marched. And it worked. If you just sit down and you talk, it works.

**Moderator:** Thank you Council Member Frey. As I look into other cities in terms of things that can be done, the things that we should follow, or things we shouldn't follow, one recent issue that's been getting a lot of attention due to somebody's executive order of the Trump administration, and some of the public remarks trying to get general sessions is the role of a sanctuary city. Many cities have adopted that title meaning very different things. Here in Minneapolis, for example, there's an ordinance preventing law enforcement from inquiring into someone's immigration status. As a mayor, how will you instruct law enforcement and city officials in terms of cooperating with the Department of Homeland Security, and by extension immigration, and customs enforcement?

**Raymond Dehn:** Great question. Minneapolis has a separation ordinance so we certainly don't that take data on persons documentation status. So right now, we don't have any information available. But at the same time, many of those individuals are turned over to the county with the county jail, extending county does collect that information. So I think we need to look hard at what are those, those incidences that we actually bring individuals to the county jail on and look at those areas that we can begin to sort of say, "This is the right thing to do to that individual. So bring them down to the country jail." Coz there might other options and we need to explore them. But beyond the legal aspect of officers in policing, we need to look hard at our communities and then we need to prepare them for times when, and we've seen it already that immigration officers are coming in and they're going to the community, they're taking people away from their families. We need to make sure that those communities are prepared and we need to begin

to stand with that. And I will call all those individuals who are here without documentation to really say, “We’re going to rise up and we’re going to stand actually in between those people and ICE agents.” If they're willing to risk what that takes to make that happen. So working with groups like Navigate and others to make sure that these communities are connected, are tuned in and that we all help them to get to the point that they're not taking our friends, our neighbors and quite frankly, parents and families and removing them. So there are lot that we can do to our city not just for our own policing but also outside the policing as well.

**Moderator:** I have a quick follow up and this, of course, for everyone. For those who support Minneapolis as a sanctuary city, there are some legislatures and other states who have tried to undermine ICE raids by publicly commenting on rumors they hear in their office. As mayor, would you be willing to undermine ICE raids in the city?

**Raymond Dehn:** Definitely, yes.

**Moderator:** Yeah. Mr. Rahman?

**Aswar Rahman:** Absolutely. So there are certain places where it just kind of... as most places, this will be a sanctuary city; this is what Minneapolis is; we will never be a city that allows our police department to enforce these immigration lawsuits, which many people disagree with. So to do that—to be in the position to do that—we have to have a very strong financial situation where we don't have that in the city right now. And part of what I mentioned, vanity infrastructure thriving and that's a symptom more than the cause itself; a symptom of a government that is spending money without consideration for long term investments. For examples, there are certain things that he's doing; there's a Convention Center Plaza, which was a—project that was ranked by the city to be the 95<sup>th</sup> most important out of the 97 projects and a recommended investment of \$0.

Nonetheless, our city budget now is going to put \$11,000,000,000 into that project. That's a lot of money wasted there. There are big wastes like this that happen year after year after year, and what that is doing is putting us in a situation which is horrible. When the federal government retaliates and when Trump's president, I think we should expect retaliation, which relation is the only real way they can retaliate, which would be financial. And when that time comes—within the next four years or the next three something months—that is when we have make sure that we are in a strong enough position to ride out the storm. And we're not in that position now; we need to get our finances in order as a city and we need to stop making useless vanity infrastructure property

investments and we need to make sure that we are ready for it when the time comes.

I'd just like to add on to that—I also think—as far as police ordinance go—we should add ordinance that doesn't criminalize government intrusive. Sometimes it doesn't make that a simple focus of what our police department is about. We need to stop this unnecessary push in order to just, to lock up an [33:00-05]. And so, we need to use a tool at our disposal to make sure that we're a fairer city, and for the larger fight ahead which there will be a fight—we have to make sure we are financially stable.

**Levy-Pounds:**

I agree wholeheartedly that Minneapolis should be a sanctuary city, and under my leadership, I will make sure that that happens by instructing the Minneapolis Police Department to not cooperate with ICE agents and participate in raids and supply information about people's immigration status. We saw during the term—the two terms—that President Obama was in office that some jurisdictions have concerns about ObamaCare, and they decided that they didn't want to participate, so they sued the federal government. So we could do something similar if we need to in those circumstances. Now, in addition to ensuring that we are a sanctuary state, I think that that needs to extend beyond instructing the police department; and we need to look at our overarching infrastructure in terms of how we treat our immigrant community. I have seen a number of politicians—some of which are running for this position—suddenly get on the news and talk about how important it is to be a sanctuary city. But what policies have you put in place before President Trump took office to make sure that our immigrant community felt welcome? To make sure that they had access to economic opportunity, and jobs, and to make sure that they weren't going to be discriminated against by slumlords when they raise concerns about the dilapidating conditions and making sure that their children are being treated fairly within the public school system? So we need to look holistically at the way in which we treat our immigrant community and to make sure they feel welcomed 365 days a year, no matter who is in office.

**Tom Hoch:**

Well, I agree with everything that has been said so far. And what I want to emphasize is when I was talking about prosperity. One of the reasons we'd be focused on that there will likely be financial penalties. And we need to be in the position to weather those, to move forward because we have an obligation as a mayor to all the citizens of the city. And when we move in one direction, we have to be prepared to take account of the repercussions of that. And so, having a vital economy, sounds like it's flops; sounds like it's really not very important; sometimes we talk about serious issues about sanctuary cities, but the reality is we have to have an economy that will continue to work, where we aren't

dependent on federal government, or frankly, the state government at this point, so that we can move forward and continue to thrive as a city.

**Jacob Frey:** Well, we need to stand up our Muslim-American community; we need to stand up for our new Americans and undocumented immigrants; we need to stand up for people of color in our city because we know—we know that Donald Trump is going after them. And I think every single person up here of reasonable doubt. It's exciting for me to tell you—I actually have the opportunity to talk about the law as well in this. And in addition to the political and social resistance that we're seeing right now in our country, we also need legal resistance. And here's what that law looks like; if you check out the wording of Donald Trump's executive order specifically calls out sanctuary cities. Now, interestingly, there isn't quite yet a very clear definition of what constitutes a sanctuary city. We might be one, we might not be one. Regardless, it says for all sanctuary cities, the federal funding is going to be deprived. But here's what we do have here in Minneapolis; in Minneapolis we have a separation; it was offered, I believe, in 2003, by then council member Gary Schiff, and what it basically says is that our police, our public officials, our people, they are not to ask the question as to whether an individual is documented or not. And because they haven't asked the question, they haven't gathered any information; and because they haven't gathered any information, when Donald Trump says "Give us all your information," the first answer should quite simply be "We don't have it." Now secondly, the statute, under which Donald Trump is using to apply his executive order is Title 8, I believe, subsection 1373. Write it down, check it out and read it. That particular statute has been deemed unconstitutional as applied by almost every single judge out there even including Justice Scalia, whom as we know is one of the more conservative justices that sat in the court years ago. So in addition to political and social resistance, we also need to think about the legal resistance; we need to find real mechanisms to protect our community here in Minneapolis.

**Moderator:** Council Member Frey, same followed Representative Dehn, would you be willing to use your office to undermine ICE raids?

**Jacob Frey:** Yes.

**Moderator:** Mayor Hodges?

**Betsy Hodges:** Well, every single person needs to feel safe and be safe calling the police; if they are victim of a crime or witness to a crime. And that is a conversation we've been having in the city a long time; we have worked for too long and too hard on that issue to ensure everyone can feel safe calling the police. Donald Trump coming

in and get in the middle of that relationship at the local level. And so, I am the mayor right now. And I have to ensure people to the extent that I can. As long as I am mayor, we will have a separation ordinance; as long as I am mayor, we will stand with our immigrant brothers and sisters in the community to make sure they are as safe and loved and know that we want them here as valuable members of our community; as long as I am mayor, that will be true; as long as I am mayor that will be true, because there are stories of kids, you know, they're going to school worried they're parents aren't going to be there when they get home. I mean, this fear mongering at a national level and this scapegoating at the national level is part of a much larger broader agenda the Trump-Pence administration had about immigration; it's about bringing us back to a time of this country that I don't think anybody in here wants us to go back to. So Trump can't get in between us. So I was talking with the members... So part of what I've been doing as mayor is I was meeting with leaders from various congregations—Christians, Muslims, and Jewish—yesterday morning. We were talking about these issues and how can we partner, working closely with congregations to make sure they are places of safety and havens for people. And also talking about, what we can do. There's conversations that we're having with philanthropy and other sectors about our legal defense fund for immigrants who are facing challenges. And finally, I implore all of you to volunteer at MJF; because through MJF—I used to work at MJF—through MJF, you can do some work, you can do some volunteering to help immigrants who are facing these issues. And I'm guessing you're going to ask me the question, and the answer is "I already have."

**Moderator:** Thank you, Mayor Hodges. This next question—before we open up to Audience Questions—is in regards to the \$15 minimum wage, which of course is an issue that's been discussed several years here in Minneapolis. So if you could please state your views on the \$15 minimum wage; if you support it, what are your views in terms of phasing tip credits and the cost-of-living adjustment?

**Aswar Rahman:** Okay. As far as minimum wage for the people of Minneapolis, the question is how do we go about that? Now, we've tried that route before, we tried this with the scheduling [40:37] represent every business in Minneapolis had scheduled 28 days at the end of 4<sup>th</sup>, no one [40:43] middle of October or till the middle of September. So there are things that we've tried to do into forging good business idea with the small business community and just, it didn't take. That was my reaction to that. So my way of managing the wages for the city is to sustainably, that's the keyword, sustainable wage growth plans, is to [41:03] business sector to file their own wage growth plans with the target of reaching \$15 an hour [41:10]. Now, that is the way I think we should move forward as a way that honestly will actually work. The tendency, especially in campaigns, here's the idea that we're just going to force this on the community. It will not work; it will

be a waste of a good idea. And when it comes to specific things like tip credit, I think businesses should be left themselves to decide on this because that's the only way we'll make sure we can move forward as a city without poisoning our economic climate. Okay. So, and this ties in very deeply to how my family is that our family started a small business here in Minneapolis in that if there was a double floor wage than there is now, and so there were credits, 75 for small business. So we're raising \$15, we wouldn't be able to establish our roots in the city. Coz my mother couldn't hire an employee because that'll be way too expensive; that is not just feasible to the kind of economic climate we have. And so it has a direct impact on families in Minneapolis and especially small business owners who we need more help, especially minority small business owners. And has a direct impact on creative ideas like this and we kind of force it in the worst way possible. We have to have a sustainable growth in the wages and a way to do that is to work with the small business community and not just creating ordinance and then expect the people to follow. That's my stance on that. I fully support raising wages in an intelligent, sustainable way.

**Levy-Pounds:**

I believe that raising the wage to \$15 an hour is an intelligent, sustainable way to do so. I referenced earlier cities like Seattle that has had a great deal of success in implementing \$15 an hour minimum wage. The folks who are leading the charge in that movement have conducted a great deal of research on the ground here, as well as in other jurisdictions and they have gone out and talked to business owners about this \$15 an hour basic minimum wage. And a lot of what they encountered initially is fear on the part of the employer about being able to pay their employees, to keep their employees, to keep their businesses going, etcetera—which are legitimate fears. But as the folks who are part of the 15 now educate business owners about how not only this is possible, but it's necessary, many of those business owners have actually come into agreement with this particular proposition. I think that in the matters of micro businesses and small businesses, we need to make sure that the city of Minneapolis does its part to provide resources so that those businesses are able to pay their employees and to keep their businesses afloat. I think that one of the reasons why this is so important is because although Minneapolis is seen as a prosperous city, we know that it's not prosperous for everyone; we know that there's not vitality for everyone. And a lot of the folks who will be most heavily impacted by a \$15 an hour minimum wage are living bad or below the poverty line; they are folks who are on the cycle of getting in and out of our criminal justice system; they are folks who are tearing on the brink of homelessness or inside homeless shelters. And so the city—it's spending resources to assist these people anywhere. So why not utilize the resources in a proactive, positive, holistic way that will ensure prosperity for all and not just those in the upper echelon.



**Aswar Rahman:** Can I just rebut that somewhat?

**Moderator:** 10 seconds.

**Aswar Rahman:** All right. That was exactly the reason why they shouldn't do it. The response of the city's own assessment program so far has been negative and mixed at best. They have seen an increase or decrease in wages of about \$1 at the expense of higher unemployment rate. So yeah, it's a great idea, but we need to do what's sustaining intelligently.

**Levy-Pounds:** I stand by my position.

**Moderator:** And so one immediate follow up then is in the city of Baltimore, the current mayor recently vetoed an ordinance raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour after campaigning in favor of it. Are you going to commit here to sign a \$15 minimum wage increase as a mayor?

**Levy-Pounds:** Absolutely. I was in support of the \$15 long before I have entered the race for mayor. It's something that I believe in wholeheartedly. I know that change does not come easily for people, but it's important if we want our society to be transformed for someone to lead the charge in doing so, and I believe that Minneapolis is the place.

**Tom Hoch:** So I believe that we need to do more approval wage workers. The city set out a process several months ago of listening sessions. That's what the city said to the rest of Minneapolis; we have a process, and we're going to hold a variety of forums and get everybody an opportunity to tell us what they think, to talk to us about what the implications are, what the hardships are, what the benefits are. That process is just ramping up. And I know it because I have been to 90% the listening sessions and heard everything that people have to say. There is not currently a proposal that has been drafted for the city. So people said they'll sign anything that comes their way, they don't even know what is going to come forward. So we want to have the time to have all of the staff that have gone out there to listen to everybody. Based on that information, it's my understanding that they're going to bring a draft ordinance forward and that ordinance that the Mayor and City Council will be looking at. So nobody's sitting up here knows exactly what that's going to look like, so it's hard to know who, what is it you would be signing. So I'm interested here from residents and business owners throughout the city, what they think will work and try to fashion an outcome—a compromise—that suits everybody's needs. But it is a failure on the part of the city to tell people, to even listen to what it is they have to say, and then gave a different path before the listening has even completed the process. So I'm going

to wait; I'm going to see what comes forward, and then I can make a decision whether I can support that or not.

**Moderator:** Mr. Hoch, will you commit to making \$15 minimum wage increase a priority to where you could potentially sign such an ordinance under your first term?

**Tom Hoch:** I will commit to making that a short priority.

**Moderator:** Council Member Frey?

**Jacob Frey:** So two years ago—before, it was an election year, before it was politically expedient—I came out and said that we need to raise the wage in the city of Minneapolis. That wasn't for political reasons; it was because I was seeing what was happening on the ground; I was seeing this dirt of affordable housing; I was seeing that people weren't able to pay the rent and a big part of that is because they do not have enough money on a monthly basis. And yes, a \$15 minimum wage could contribute greatly to that. Now, if we're looking how to set it up—yes—nuance is if not a four-letter word; nuance is not a four-letter word at all. Can we do it without counting tips? Yes, I think we can get there. But yes, we do have to account for some of these small local businesses and how they operate. When you look at McDonald's or Burger King and Wendy's—I think they can handle \$15 and I think they can handle it in the very near future. So we'll start taking about how some of these small businesses that operate; they can't just be for shock value. It has to be phased-in overtime; we have to be working with them through the process. And yes, Mr. Hoch is right; we should absolutely be listening—and that's a big part of our job; it's digging into the fine and nitty-gritty details. I've heard several people kind of talk about Seattle's ordinance. Several people. Both the positives and the negatives in Seattle. Seattle has a relatively complex ordinance; they have a quicker phase-in for larger businesses; they have a longer phase-in for some of the smaller businesses; and, interestingly, they do count tips for a period of time. Basically, what they're saying is that if you're going to count tips, then you got to get \$15 immediately; if you're not going to count tips, then you can get paid-in overtime long for the rest of the businesses. So accounting for nuance in all of this is exceedingly important. But yes, I will finish up.

But yes, we do need to raise the minimum wage—and by the way, \$15 an hour ain't much; \$15 an hour is not a life. And why are we not talking about vocational training in our schools? Why are we not talking about a direct pipeline for kids on the north side to make sure they got an immediate job in addition to minimum wage which we should be doing? We also need to be focusing on the real world.

**Moderator:** Thank you. Mayor Hodges?

**Betsy Hodges:** So it is ridiculous that there are people who are working fulltime and they're still in poverty. And I think, as a community, we value each other more than that and we value people more than that. And that is why I have long supported an increase to the minimum wage at the state level; thank you very much Representative Dehn for your vote to raise the minimum wage to what it is now. And I was working on a regional strategy. I have concerns about Minneapolis going on a loan; I have made no secret of that. I was working on legislation at the state level to do the minimum wage increase in the seventh country metro area. But with the outcome of the recent election, that path became very narrow. And we do need to raise the minimum wage, and we're going to raise it in the city of Minneapolis. And the question is what kind of minimum wage are we going to have? And the one thing I have said—loud and clear—is that we cannot and should not have a tip penalty; we should not leave—particularly women workers—behind by introducing tier system on wage. We're one of the seven states in the country does not have it. Seven states that don't have a tip penalty actually have more vibrant restaurant and hospitality communities than those communities that do. 80 percent of people who are earning minimum wage or on the lower income range do not—we cannot leave them behind whenever we do moving forward. So yes, there are still considerations to be had; I've been attending listening sessions, I've met retail workers; I've heard their stories of how difficult it is to live under current minimum wage; I've met with members of the industry. There are questions to be answered; what is the right way? How long should it be before we commit? What is the way to the end? And one thing that is for certain is that we can't and should not have a tip penalty in the city of Minneapolis.

**Raymond Dehn:** So, I appreciate Jacob being out there a few years ago on issues of \$15 an hour, for raising the minimum wage. Four years ago, I'd been standing around the picket lines with groups. I was actually one of those who fight for wages that they're currently not giving, as well as trading the local wage for people to work four jobs a week. As Mayor Hodges mentioned, four years ago, we passed for a raise in the minimum wage in the state of Minnesota. It went from \$7.25 to \$9.50 an hour. And what does that mean? It means that some people have a little bit more money in their pockets as a result of it to help them around, but it's not enough. We'll eventually get to \$15 an hour because we have cost of living as part of that. But that would take 15 years before we get there and that is not soon enough for the individuals and the families that need the help. But really, what does that mean—raising the wage? Because, you know, it helps some individuals; it helps the whole state. Raising the wage from \$7.25 to \$9.50 equals \$5,400,000 every day in the circulation in our economy. Minnesota has a great

economy because of things like that. You know, after a lot of talk over the past several months about the listening sessions—and I think listening sessions are great, but we also have to have data that interject into the listening sessions. As I've mentioned, I practiced () for a while, and if I walked into a client and said, "Okay, I'm just going to be listening to what you want to do." They would tell me lots of things and I would do what they did and it would really work because I bring a certain type of expertise to that. So I think often times, we have to suggest things, and we're talking—that means like talking to businesses and saying, "We are going to have reduced cost because we may improve public safety because we make our products elsewhere." So let's have that conversation about how we assist those businesses during this transition period. Because ultimately, if we get there, we are going to have individuals that are going to have more difficulty finding jobs, low unemployment traps sit in our city because people outside the region are going to come and want to work in Minneapolis.

**Moderator:** Thank you, Representative. Now, I want to take an opportunity to begin asking some audience questions. I know some folks have already written their questions down on some of the note cards we've passed out. I believe we still have some more if anyone has questions they want to submit. Someone on the back to collect them.

In the last answer, it was mentioned that a \$15 increase in the wage would benefit not just the city, but the surrounding metropolitan area and state as a whole, which I think transitions while under this audience' question which is "How do you intend to bridge the gap between Minneapolis and greater Minnesota?"

Nekima Levy-Pounds? And I would say that each candidate will get one minute to respond to audience questions.

**Levy-Pounds:** I think it would be another who will start.

**Moderator:** Oh, sorry. Yeah.

**Tom Hoch:** I'm not entirely sure what you're asking. Can you just repeat the question?

**Moderator:** "How do you intend to bridge the gap between Minneapolis and greater Minnesota?" That is—

**Tom Hoch:** In terms of?

**Moderator:** Inter-city partnerships, in terms of collaborations with the region—

**Tom Hoch:** So you're talking in terms of, red state blue urban or ...

**Levy-Pounds:** Minimum wage, range of minimum wage.

**Moderator:** It wasn't specific to raising the wage, but in terms of policies or issues that might be done to have Minneapolis become more cooperative engaging with their region.

**Tom Hoch:** Sure, there's a couple of really obvious things that I think everyone including Representative Dehn here needs to do, and that is collaborate certainly with the suburbs. As we talked about affordable housing— and I'm the person up here who's actually going for affordable housing programs, one has to take a metro-wide approach to addressing that issue because people don't just move within the city; let's say 700 unit building in Richfield becomes unaffordable because a hedge fund out to New York comes in with granite countertops and makes the units unaffordable to people left out in the cold as a result of that because they can no longer afford the property are left to scatter everywhere. And it really becomes a metropolitan-wide issue about how to best address their housing needs. So you have to be a leader in terms of bringing people together. And I think that when we talk about the legislature than having a larger group of people who come forward, from across the local spectrum in search of a solution for even immigrant problem is the best way to help them out to field.

**Jacob Frey:** Well, Minneapolis is operating in a regional autonomy and we do need to recognize that. And in doing so, we have to recognize also the dynamic that's happening over the state legislature right now, which is that oftentimes, St. Paul seems to be having this tremendous relationships with people in the other parts of the state, while Minneapolis is shunned. And I don't—Minneapolis is a spectacular place, but at the same time we shouldn't be elitist about our perceptions and we should not be excluding other people in other areas of the state. Yet at times—at times we do do that. Also, we kind of need this internal reflection as well. I think I should give you a couple of examples; there are things that people on the higher range who are looking for jobs, weren't valuing Minneapolis. But what does that higher range do? Well, still, what if we're to have a resolution in Minneapolis that said "We're going to make some best efforts to ensure developments that went up? We're not going to use Chinese Steel; we're going to use American Steel. What will that do to the relationship? All we need to do is foster. Simultaneously, I don't think we should be exclusive. I can tell you that the individual that's managing my campaign right now is a former state representative from Crosby's; his name is [57:24]. He was one of the heroes of marriage equality, voted for him, and then got the boot. And building those relationship is another areas of the state is great.

**Moderator:** Thank you Councilor.

**Betsy Hodges:** Well, it's incredibly important that Minneapolis has a strong relationship as we can with our partners in the region and our partners throughout the state. And I've seen that firsthand; I was president of the League of Minnesota Cities, I served on that board for six years; I've built relationship with mayors and council members from across the entire state. As I've governed as mayor, I've talked to them so that we hand and hand can go to the legislature and advocate on behalf of our shared values and advocate on behalf of cities that have had success on that; thwarting attempts, Republican attempts to cut local government aid doesn't just hurt Minneapolis and St. Paul. It hurts cities all across the state; we've been able to come together to do that. And some of them is a recognition that we love to say Minneapolis is an economic engine of the state, which is true. But just because we are valuable, doesn't mean that Greater Minnesota is not equally valuable to us. So understand that because it concerns people how are we just getting more time and attention, but also hey, our kids move to Minneapolis and they don't come back to our town and we're unhappy about that. And so, it's highly human connection, human conversations about what we value together that moves us forward as best we can.

**Tom Hoch:** But there the last time I look, we have terrible relationship with the legislature. I mean that. It is true. I mean, we have terrible relationship—and it is very much a red state out there and that's because we haven't built those relationships.

**Moderator:** Excuse me, we can just allocate 10 seconds to respond to the questions. Thank you sir. Representative Dehn?

**Raymond Dehn:** Oh, I actually work in the environment at the state. I see it every day. And it's good and it's bad. And I say that because one of the things when I talk to my colleagues from Minnesota, I always try to stress the importance of diverse economy that we have in our city. We are in that last than many other states that have very, very strong economies in certain areas. So I think it's important that the mayor continue to work with other mayors throughout the state, as well as have solid relationships at the capital because there are going to be a lot of things that are going to be happening at the capital; they are happening right now. They are proposing, accounting over \$150,000,000 to metro transit, which is going to be a reduction of 40% of the routes in the inner city. And, the thing is we can talk to our suburban colleagues about this, but guess what? They have all their money for their suburban transit systems. As a matter of fact, they are actually getting more. So we have to do this and we have to do it hard and we need someone that actually has knowledge working at the capital.

**Aswar Rahman:** The type of integration I want is the type that will preserve us in center of the economic equation. We need to stay a strong center of the economic environment within twin cities. To do that, we have to make sure that we stay away from policies that make us less competitive. We have to make sure that we are not taking the approaches that would make us a less hospitable businesses in our country. And one of the examples of course is we have to up our enrolment numbers, our businesses and programs. The City of Minneapolis, surprisingly enough, has really strong businesses programs but the enrolment numbers, I think, are very unsatisfactory. And so there were these things that, of course, to grow north program is focused on our Minneapolis. There are programs that are specifically, they are really long term programs. The thing that's necessary is to up enrolment numbers and that is a central responsibility of the mayor. Because the mayor of Minneapolis can encourage, 10% across the board of our enrollment in these businesses and programs. Build a healthier economy which will make us strong, more integrated with these kind around us and therefore we will have a city that has status climb in that area and make sure that we never lose that role as the economic heart.

**Levy-Pounds:** I think that a collaboration between Minneapolis, greater Minnesota and other parts of the state is vitally important, but I think that there are also times in which Minneapolis has to be a leader in terms of pushing for the changes that we need to see. I experienced that firsthand during the fourth briefing occupation after Jamar Clark was killed in November of 2015. And that occurred in North Minneapolis and during that particular situation, 18 days, what we saw were people coming from all across the state of Minnesota; rural areas, the suburbs to bring firewood, to bring clothing, to bring food to people who were in need and people who were standing in solidarity for justice. So I think that there is a desire for collaboration, but it's important for government leaders to be progressive and to be open and to not shy away from matters like race and equity.

**Raymond Dehn:** So just to add, I know that—

**Moderator:** Excuse me, sir, if you'd like to, you went first...

**Raymond Dehn:** Oh I'm sorry. I did? Oh right. I'm sorry. Okay. Oops.

**Moderator:** So what we're going to do is we're actually going to get these questions a minute and a half instead—people have a lot of questions. Yeah, yes. So one of the next questions from the audience we have is "What will you do specifically to address rising violent crime rates in our city, especially in at-risk neighborhoods in terms of methods, policing, and community outreach?" Council Member Frey, would

you go first?

**Jacob Frey:**

Well, it's been frustrating. Over the last several years, we've probably had some, the worst police community relationship for quite some time. Simultaneously, we have had an uptick in certain crimes, specifically shooting. And yes, that is an issue that we need to be addressing, obviously; I mean, safety is one of the first things; it's one of the essential tenets of city government. It has to be tackled first.

First, we got to look at the cultural dynamic of the police department as a whole and specifically implicit bias. I mean, implicit bias, which [1:03:38] needs to be extended very substantially. Everybody—every single person in this room—including myself—has bias. And that bias comes out more when you're tired, or you're hungry, or you're sick and you're forced to make work; you're forced to make a split-second decision, and most of the time, cops by themselves in those circumstances. So we're not acknowledging that bias.

And two, finding ways to train yourself, what is, in reality, a natural human tendency is really critical. And not only that, but you know we should be expecting a lot from our cops. But if we're expecting a lot from our cops, I think we also need to give them the tools to succeed. And right now, a lot of you here are simply rooting for dialing 911 or 911 call. When that happens, you do not have the time to engage with the small local businesses; you don't have the time to engage with the residents; you don't have the time to engage with people on the streets so you can proactively keep people safe. And a big part of that is—yes is narrowing the needs of some of these officers. And I've been saying that for the last couple of years, and I'm glad to see that it's that being instituted in some fashion. But yes, that needs to happen, and additionally, we need more cops in the city; we need more cops of color, as well.

**Betsy Hodges:**

So every person in every neighborhood in Minneapolis should be safe and feel safe. And I take this as a question about crime, particularly violent crime, and one of the things that I'm proud of in my time as mayor is that I have led with the chief a movement away from public safety evils, law enforcement, to the center of gravity being our relationship between law enforcement and the communities is the safest way until we can move forward together. And in the wake of [1:05:15] and during that, I heard many community voices, and as I listened—and as I've talked to people—what I heard was people wanting to take more responsibility for safety in their areas. And so the budget that I've proposed for this year, I put over \$1,000,000 worth of investment in community-based public safety strategies. Because in the cities that use those and rely on those, they have had the most success in reducing violent crimes. And so what that looks like is yes, community policing; more police officers so they do have time to build the



relationships in the community. That works to build trust, as well as public safety. But also violence intervention strategy, which is community led, coming together with the people that we know are most likely to be the next shooters, the next people shot, and saying, "We will give you everything in our power. Everything you need to turn your life on a different track. If you don't take it, the natural consequences of living like that are going to come about upon you, and we don't want you in a jail cell; we don't want you in a casket; we want you productive in our communities." Communities that have done that have lowered violent crime up to 60 percent in a way that law enforcement alone won't do. There are other investments like that that are community based that I have invested in because those were...

**Raymond Dehn:** 90 seconds, right? So we can talk a lot about community policing and all those types of things, what it means. We have a culture in our police department that has to change. And I think one of the ways we can begin to change that is to de-militarize our police. There is a huge barrier between the police officers and between the people in the community and that's de-militarization of our police.

Until we, we do step, among armament that they carry, how they engage—we're not going to do anything out in the community; we have great officers that work really, really hard, great relationships out in the community. And unfortunately, some of them end up getting demoted. So I don't quite understand what's going on in the city hall relative to policing, but I am not on the inside.

But we can talk all we want about it; if we're not addressing the systemic nature of individuals who live in poverty, we're just going to continue throwing money into that. So let us make sure that they have, youth have opportunities, not only for youth programs around making them better citizens, to different citizens of our society, but also jobs; they need money in their pockets.

Let's address issues around addiction and alcoholism. It's so much of that people's lives that if we can begin to address those issues, we'll begin to reduce those types of crime, and ultimately, the number one thing we have to do is reduce the amount of guns that currently circulate in our society. I fight this at the capital all the time. There are gun mills that want to actually put more guns out there, so that more people will have guns. And quite frankly, I think we need to call out the gun manufacturers in this process as well.

**Aswar Rahman:** So, we live by the north east of Minneapolis. Both of those members of gun watch list stay there. Sitting here, I feel like I'm on the other side of the equation because our homes are in a neighborhoods that are worst affected than the last four years. When somebody comes, you don't tell them, "Oh, you need to change

your diet." You need to get them immediate remedies to make sure that immediate problem is first and foremost taken care of. And the immediate problem now in this city now is 300 people will get shot a year. And we, but that's a bad situation at the end. And so we need an actual policy that will move us towards the remedy for that problem. The problem with the city is traumatically less safe than it was four years ago. One of the main things we can do is diversify the police department, while at the same time instructing police department. And the reason we need to do that is because statistically, we're about a hundred officers short. So my goal as a mayor over the next four years to get 25 officers each year and account for retirement numbers. And to make sure including those included in recruitment sessions to make sure that many of those police officers are either Black, Latino, or women—as much as possible. The other thing to do is to make sure we improve our police department. We need more professional police department. That is a central piece that's missing here. And that police department of the city of Minneapolis is kind of like a small—it's like a boys club; coz it's 95% people who live out of the city. It's severely underrepresented for minority communities. And we need to make sure that the city's police department not only like the city itself, thinks like the city itself, but also has a certain parameters in place that encourages them to act professionally and a major step of that is liability insurance. Those are my 3 plans. Diversification, reestablishing the proper numbers, and insurance.

**Levy-Pounds:**

I'm probably the only candidate here who has lived in the heart of the inner city. Particularly, I grew up in the South Central Los Angeles where I moved here in about 1984 at the start of the war on drugs. I lived in a community in which there were gangs, in which there were young people cycling in and out of the justice system, and in which I had friends who were actually killed as a result of gun violence and gang rallies in that community. What I learned from my experience in Los Angeles is that we cannot incarcerate our way out of these problems. Too often, we think that the solutions are in how much money we pour into law enforcement, which we just got our city to due in December when they approved the next budget to add more officers and add over \$1,000,000 to the next budget while the people who are mostly impacted by community violence are crying out for help. One way that you solve a problem like this is through jobs. I'll take the example of Father Gregory, who is a Jesuit priest, who says, "Jobs, not jails. Nothing stops a bullet like a job."

Many of the young people who are engaged in violent activity have lost hope. They don't have a sense of belonging in society and they don't have access to employment opportunities. So what we can take is a more realistic approach and build infrastructure that provides hope; that provides employment; that provides housing and resources, we will drastically cut down the violence that occurs in

our community. We cannot keep blaming the people who have lost hope in a system that they did not create. And as we look up here, they're not running.

**Tom Hoch:**

So I'm also in agreement with what you've just said. I would approach this from an outcome standpoint. So rather than running around, throwing this strategy, this tactic—whatever hit the wall—what I'd like to do is I'd be saying, "You know, let's look at the outcome that we want." If you live at Southwest Minneapolis, your approval rate for the police is 98 percent. If you live near North, it's 47 percent. If you live in Phillips, it's probably closer to 78 percent. So what I would do is I would focus in on what can we do to change the outcome? What are we going to do— we're going to survey people, we're going to be transparent about what happened, we're going to set goals—set a goal of 95 percent approval, 95 percent of the people are going to say, "You know, I have a good relationship with the police; they're doing a good job." And that will enable us to then track that. And when things aren't going the way we want, we're going to make some adjustments to that process, and then we'll be able to determine what works and what really doesn't work. And by the way, it's not going to be the same everywhere, okay? If we're doing community-based policing, it's going to have to take this character from the people who live in that community and that's where we're going to get the strategy, so it's really going to work.

**Moderator:**

Thank you. So our last question, "Lots of similar ideas have been expressed on the issues; why should you be the leader that help advance these goals? How will you be effective or more effective than your competitors?" And Mayor Hodges, you can go first.

**Betsy Hodges:**

If we acknowledge that Minneapolis is an extraordinary city—and I do—and I think we all do. But if we also simultaneously acknowledge that Minneapolis is a city that faces some distinct challenges—which we do—particularly regarding race; we have some of the biggest divides between black people and people of color in this city in the country. Then you think to yourselves, "What sort of leadership is needed to make sure that we are using our strengths and building on our strengths, while also meeting our challenges and meeting our challenges well?" And what we need is transformative leadership. And what I mean by that is that isn't about us; that isn't about, just being a cheerleader; that isn't about just saying, "Hey, we're really great," and the rest will take care of themselves. It's getting in there every day and saying, "Okay. If we're really going to be a city that is about equity, how do we make sure that our public works capital budget is based on equity or not in addition to asking "How are we going to make sure we're doing all the work possible to build trust between the community and the police department?" It's about making sure to manage through the resistance people have to change; that the resistance has much more charge to it when that

change is about equity and has much more charge to it when we're talking to white people about managing some change on behalf of equity. I have that experience, both as a human being—I've been serving for many years, I know what it's like to live through the discomfort of change. But we are living through that as a community and we have to be willing to sit through our discomfort and have a leader who will stand strong in the face of that resistance to actually get us through to the other side. A slogan of "Make Minneapolis Great Again" is not sufficient; we actually have to do the work together to make it true.

**Moderator:** And before you answer, Representative Dehn, I just want to clarify that this is simply the last question, but there will still be an opportunity for closing remarks after this question. So Representative Dehn?

**Raymond Dehn:** So what makes me better than the other individuals at this table, I think it's really a good question, and I would state that, I started working in Minneapolis at the neighborhood level and I continued that work all through living on the other side in the last 20 years, specifically. And I focused and I fought for this and I fought for issues around social justice, around criminal justice issues long before I was elected. I was in the streets; I was in the lobby of Target Corporation to try to get them to change their policies around hiring individuals with criminal records. And I continued to do that work while I'd been at the capital, and will continue to do that work as I move forward as a mayor. I think it's really easy to sit and think about all these great things that you're going to do as a mayor, but ultimately, I think that great work is going to have that happen out in the neighborhoods; out in the communities with folks like you that are engaging. Because ultimately, we are only as good as elected official if you are able to engage us. And that means not just waiting for you to win our interest, but going out and being with people in the community; meeting them where they are, whether that's at a little community meeting, or whether that's at a coffee shop, or whether it's at something where they're protesting; what's going on in their neighborhood? Whether it's being development, or something else that's happening. So I think the mayor that is actually with people, with the people and engaging folks is something we need—and we haven't actually have that for a while in the city of Minneapolis.

**Aswar Rahman:** Well, to answer the present question, I'd say that we have lots of similarities, so the difference is what you decide on. I feel on a couple of subjects going on while I've been here, certain way, and so really, if you do believe that the city should have a sustainable way to grow in the wages, and that it should be some of this driven organically as it's enforced from the top-down, then, I feel that I'm your candidate.

If you think the police department should be properly stacked, that 800 officers can't do the job of 900 officers, and that those new 100 officers should ideally be people who are more representative of the city. Well, I'm your candidate. If that's not what you believe in, I am not your candidate. And if you believe in evidence-based organization—if you believe in a type of government that looks at the kind of data from us. And makes decisions based off of that before it approaches more forgoing on some pre-existing principle, well then I have to admit, I am your candidate in that respect.

But the two central things—and I think this election is going to be a reference base—we have two central things; first one is the wage growth, whether that's a sustainable wage that's the way to go, \$15 is the way to go; and whether or not our police department should be morphed into a more communalist method, or there if there should be a simultaneously strong central police department along with the stronger community police department. I am for the ones, of course, that make the most sense. So that's, I believe, the central difference between me and my candidates.

**Levy-Pounds:**

I think this campaign is much bigger than those two issues that you named. I think that it is about the future of our city and the example that we can set for the rest of the nation in terms of what it means to truly live out our values of equity, justice, and prosperity for all. Well I'm here with a number of esteemed colleagues; I don't see any of them as my true opponents; I see my true opponents as the status quo. Meeting the comfort level in which we have all been conditioned to operate out of that says that change is not possible; that says the way that things are the way that it will always be. I completely disagree with that. And I think that right now, we have an opportunity to shift the paradigm in our city to make sure that we're paying people a living wage; to make sure that we are valued and all of the residents, whether they make six figures or they make pennies a day standing on the corner on the side of a freeway begging for change. At the end of the day, we need to make a decision about who we are as a city, where we are going, and what we hope to become. I am the leader that can help to shift the paradigm and take us where we need to go; because I have been from the inner city into the halls of academia, into the streets with the community, into board rooms sharing certain organizations and into problem solving model as a researcher within the law school. I have the most well-rounded experience to help combat the status quo in our city.

**Tom Hoch:**

I think we're getting pretty close to the closing statements. So what I'll bring to the table is a wealth of experience. For me, seeking to be the mayor of Minneapolis is a capstone; it's not a stepping stone. I have a lifetime of efforts to make this city better. I was a school teacher for Minneapolis public schools. I'm

an attorney. I work on doing historic preservation of the state theater—the opera theater, The Pantages Theater. I've generated jobs for about 450,000–500,000 people downtown to the Minneapolis each and every year. I was a leader of a variety of volunteer organizations—Planned Parenthood and Working Men Society. And I've bring all of these up to you to underscore that when you have somebody saying that say I'm your mayor, they need to be somebody who can make the change that's needed; they are the ones who can pick up the phone, they know who to call, and they can get the job done. I'm all about results and improving the lives of the people in the city—and I mean every single one of them—is the central job of the mayor: make life better.

**Jacob Frey:**

Well, transformative leadership does not exist unless transformation actually takes place. And we always hear a lot of this; we hear the catchphrases, but ultimately, what we're aiming about is results. And what I'm not under the false impression that everybody agree with my policies—and I'm not under the false impression that everybody unanimously likes me. The things that I promised when I ran for the city council for the third, pretty much equally agree had happened. Had happened. I promised dramatically increase residential debts. And we set new records of that. We promised to get rid of some of these service parking lots downtown so that there was a consistent experience as you walk through out. And by the way, that's happened. We promised to put affordable housing in the middle and upper income areas. And that has happened. We built 15,000—50 percent-60 percent of median income, the seniors in the Riverfront. In North Loop, there's going to be housing going up for people with a felony record—30 percent of median income. This work in not easy; this is difficult. But it takes part happens when you build a broad coalition ultimately make these things happen. We promised a new community-based public school. We've built—we've coordinated with the parents; we worked with the school board, and it's happened. We promised record numbers of new smaller local businesses owners. Check out what's happening in North Loop; check out what's happening in East Camden—they are opening up. A lot of people can talk, but the results are what we should be measured by.

**Moderator:**

Thank you Council. Now, although that question got very close to closing remarks, we do want to end here to have an opportunity for people to have one minute to reiterate why they are running this campaign, and maybe to finely distinguish themselves from their competitors. So we begin our first closing remark from Representative Dehn.

**Raymond Dehn:**

Again, thank you all for taking your time to sit out here and come out here, listening to all of speak about our visions for the city of Minneapolis. I think we need to have a city that's innovative, that's accessible, and that's just. And those

aren't just words; those are actually actions. If we don't innovate as we move forward as a city, we're going to be left behind from other cities throughout the United States as well as other cities throughout the world. We need a city hall that's going to be accessible; that people are actually going to be able to connect with whether they're council members, whether it's the mayor, but ultimately, whether it's the rank-and-file of the people working in the city that's going to be important. As well as we need a just city that really takes on equity. I appreciate Jacob; many of the things that's Jacob's done—in the third ward and downtown. The state played a large role in all of those projects. And ultimately, those relationships at the state are going to help the city to do the job that it needs to do in moving forward.

**Aswar Rahman:** We're losing sight of what it means to me a strong city; a strong city's got to have a healthy economy and needs to be safe. And the city, for the past four years, have gotten less safe and less hospitable, for a start. What we need is proper investment and a proper [1:23:53]. We need to move away from vanity in infrastructure investments. We need a police department that's professional, puts the safety first, and a police department would be best insured. We need these things and with the [1:24:03] details that many of us, and as Democrats, we hold ourselves very high standards on our ideals, but when it gets down to actually creating a city where these ideals come to bear fruit, what we need to put in place is policies and to make sure we have the clarity of mind; we need to make sure the plans in place, and are creating these results that we want. Increasing the wages to \$15 per hour is not enough. We need to see this economy that care for our safety and that do over this forum, we have found that there is a solid set of plans that can be followed and represented. [1:24:35].

**Levy-Pounds:** I believe that the city of Minneapolis is ripe for change. I believe that the time for change is now. And that change is going to be dependent upon all of us becoming involved, using our voices, and demanding to [1:24:59] is not just for ourselves, but for those who are typically marginalized and whose voices are not being heard. As your next mayor, I would make sure that the voices of the people are being heard loud and clear; that their solutions are being implemented into the policies and the ordinances of the city; that if we would look at existing ordinances and remove the ones that are not truthful or useful just as we push to remove ordinances against spitting and lurking that had no justification for being on the books, but were resulting in people cycling in and out of the criminal justice system. My law students did that research. We presented it to the city council. It led to the repeal of those two ordinances—and let me tell you: if I'm your next mayor, that's just the beginning. We will take a problem-solving approach together. We will truly become one Minneapolis, and we will get the equity and the justice that our city deserves.

**Tom Hoch:**

It's easy to talk about change; it is easy to talk about the things you're going to do, but one of the best indicators, I believe, in this, think about your evidence class, is what has happened in the past. Who sits up here and has a long track record that you can rely on, whether it is negotiating the [1:26:11], home litigation, whether it is transforming an agency into a high performing agency, whether it's actually saving destroyed buildings and creating jobs and creating economic activity. Somebody who has that kind of track record—that's me. You need somebody sitting in the mayor's office who has demonstrated that they have the ability to get things done because it isn't really about words; it's about action. I'll take my values, my integrity, creativity, and tenacity, and ascendancy to get the job done. I appreciate your support. Thank you.

**Jacob Frey:**

Well, several years ago, I graduated law school, I moved across the country from the East Coast to really start my life here in Minneapolis. It wasn't a decision that was made by default; it was a decision because I believe that this city can be amazing. And as you all, in the next several years, are making some decisions about where you decide to live, where you decide to work—where you decide to raise a family, even. I want to make sure that you make that same decision—right now. At year 2020, about 50 percent of the workforce is going to be Millennials. 50 percent of the workforce is going to be Millennials—that's scary; that's also a gigantic opportunity. This is no longer the Eisenhower administration where with just 45-minute community work, and the American Dream is a white picket fence in the suburb. People want to live in a wonderful city that is equitable; where there's opportunity for every single person; where you have a job that you believe in; where you can be brought. That is the city that we will ultimately create, and I would do that as your mayor.

**Betsy Hodges:**

So I can give a closing statement that's about the record that I've already had as mayor based on the promises that I made four years ago. Small business development, \$40,000,000 invested in affordable housing, organics recycling—we need talk about the climate today—organics recycling, renewable goals and partnership with our utilities—first time ever in the country. But in the end, the question that we are asking is through this mayoral race is not a question about me and my record; it's not a question about the dreams and visions of me or any of us up here—it's actually about who we are as a community; who we are as people, who you are, and who you choose to be as members of the community, and what kind of community we want to build together. And are we willing to walk through the difficult—the difficult moments of change, as well as the exhilarating moments of success together to get through to the other side where really, we are a city that is not just over setup for everybody, but we're actually being built and created, and we're prosperous because everybody is contributing



to our growth and prosperity. That's what I've been after as a mayor, and that's what I will continue to do as mayor in my second term, and I ask for your vote and your support. Thank you.

**Moderator:**

And with that, I want to thank each of our candidates for attending today's DFL Minneapolis Mayoral Candidate Forum. Let's give them all a round of applause. And I'd like to remind our audience that caucuses are this Tuesday, April 4. And if you'd like to learn more about these candidates—and I'm sure some of you are happy to stay and answer some more questions. Thank you everyone for coming. We certainly appreciate it, and you have a nice rest of your day.