

Faith Action for Community Equity

Mayoral Accountability Questionnaire

Homelessness

1. What should the City do about homelessness which is different from what the City is doing now? For example, what is your stance on the effectiveness of sweeps? Would you continue this practice, or use a different method? Do you have an idea for a new program? Should any existing program be expanded or modified? Should any existing program be reduced or cut? How much in additional funding would it take to implement your ideas?

We must try everything to resolve homelessness, including innovative solutions for tiny homes, shelter space and additional facilities for care and counseling.

Last year, I brought a plan to the council to spend \$23 million to address homelessness, which allowed each of the nine council districts to spend the money appropriately for their district. That included shelters, rest stops, outreach, affordable housing and service zones and hygiene facilities.

This year, I proposed that the city invest more in mental health and addiction recovery. We do not have enough recovery/treatment facilities to address the problem.

I propose providing incentives for people to obtain certifications necessary to provide addiction counseling or to pursue studies in social work and psychology, especially those individuals who have successfully emerged from their own battles with addiction and alcoholism.

We must recognize the challenges of dual diagnoses that can be difficult to treat. Perhaps we can partner with our military, where they have found successful strategies to treat PTSD with dual diagnoses.

In addition, we must eliminate barriers that keep our houseless residents from getting the help they need, including tedious paperwork that proves to be too much for individuals with mental illness, addiction, without computers or access to information. We need boots on the ground to evaluate and bring help to those who need it without delays that can keep people on the streets for years.

Any sit-lie ban is not compassionate disruption. It is only another term for moving a homeless individual from one sidewalk to another. It does nothing to solve the problem. It is a means to reduce the visual and social reminder of homelessness.

Health

2. Reopening our economy to tourism may bring a second wave of COVID-19 infection that could be worse than the first, and that may necessitate imposing restrictions on business, travel, and activities. What is your assessment of the measures taken so far to keep Hawai'i safe from COVID-19, and what changes, if any, would you make in approach if a second wave of COVID-19 warrants new restrictions?

This is a difficult and costly situation for everyone. We don't know how much longer this situation will continue; uncertainty is painful.

Hopefully, we can learn from the cities that have opened too soon, who are experiencing a surge, so we do not have to repeat their mistakes.

We must prevent COVID-19 from getting a bigger foothold in Hawai'i. Today, our government is struggling with how to do that and when to do it. How do we open to tourism as the pandemic is sweeping the markets that make up our visitors? We are not ready with enough tracking and tracing personnel. In addition, we have now been informed that our ability to test has been cut in half and results could take up to ten days.

We simply do not have the right tools yet. We are not ready.

This is a difficult thing to say, as people who depend on tourism are struggling to feed their families.

But the safety and the health of Hawai'i's workers and residents must come first.

If we open too soon and Hawai'i experiences a surge from the mainland that we cannot manage, our industry will be affected for years to come.

If we manage this responsibly, with testing, tracing, tracking and isolating cases and by managing visitor spaces with a standardized approach that is consistent throughout the industry for cleaning, distancing, sanitizing and masks; if we keep our visitor industry workers safe, we will become the destination for a safe vacation.

I also believe that we can get visitors to agree to be traced and tracked if we give them incentives to participate in these programs when they arrive in the state.

We cannot carry on with business as usual. I know that sanitation, testing, tracking, isolation - cost money. But Hawai'i cannot sustain pre-COVID levels of tourism. Our revenues have dropped to less than half of the 1980s, but we have doubled our visitors. It is time that we ask more from our visitors.

We have not sorted out the testing and tracking. We are not doing an adequate job of quarantining our visitor arrivals, especially those staying in illegal short-term rentals. We have lost half of our capacity to test. We do not have a viable means of testing within three days of arrival.

There is too much at stake. That means we are not ready.

However, for those who have tested negative, within the three-day limit, they should be allowed to come if they sign our visitor document to allow for tracking and isolation if someone tests positive.

Our efforts should be concentrating on how we can feed and house our people, because this is where we are now.

Public Safety

3. If elected, what is your plan to reform and strengthen accountability within the HPD, and with the larger community? Do you support the concept of community-based policing? If so, what steps would you take to implement it?

The entire country is engaged in a productive discussion about how we do policing. Our own police officers should be part of that discussion.

Our legislature passed a bill that would allow us to access information regarding police officers that have been disciplined; I hope that Gov. Ige signs it because it is a step towards transparency in government.

I am proud of those whose protests are reaching the ears of politicians and finally, creating change. I too, demand an end to systemic racism. We are so lucky to be here in Hawai'i where diversity is one of our biggest strengths as a community. I wish the world could see how we live as one.

But the Honolulu PD, though they performed well during the recent demonstrations, have a long history of conflicts. We do incarcerate Native Hawai'ians at a higher rate than other races. Bad actors in the police department are shielded from public disclosure.

Our police commission should be strengthened to investigate complaints against officers and enforce civil procedures.

I believe that our officers should be outfitted with body cameras. We should also have cameras for police vehicles.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that our force is functioning at only 60 percent of capacity. That cannot continue. With the added burden of policing visitors who break quarantine and a spike in crime, we need to attract and retain lateral officers and new recruits to fill these positions.

It is also time to reexamine the mission of policing. For the past several decades, across the country, police have focused their budgets on the acquisition of crime-fighting technology. Perhaps this is the moment when we look at demilitarizing our police.

I support the concept of community-based policing. It will require no less than a shift in the paradigm, but the discussion has begun.

The police unions have far too much influence in politics.

Former Chief Louis Kealoha, through undue influence, almost got away with the crimes he has been convicted of - with the full support of the mayor and the police commission.

Yes, this is a time for change, and I believe it is a change for the better.

Rail

4. Considering the shortfalls in funding rail, are you in favor of reducing the length of the rail line, or are you in favor of ending it at Ala Moana Center, as planned? If so, how would you get the funding needed to address the shortage?

In 2008, our residents voted for a high-speed rail project by charter.

We have a mandate to complete the project, but we need to do it right.

I am very disappointed in the people who allowed corruption and payoffs to infiltrate the project and I hold them responsible for the delays that make people in my district still sit in traffic for hours. I am one of these drivers and so I will do everything I can to fix things at HART.

I believe we must resolve any uncertainty about our economic recovery before we make any decision regarding this expensive project. I will not vote for increased funding at this time. I oppose any additional costs to residents, especially with so many residents out of work That is especially true because HART is undergoing federal scrutiny amid incredible cost increases and delays. I will not throw more money at HART until I know how that money is being spent. I will

seek public input on the short-term bonds being increased to longer-term bonds that will spread out the cash-on-hand during our economic crisis.

Accountability

Please respond with only 'Yes' or 'No' to this question:

5. The focus of today's event is Accountability. Will you commit to provide regular updates for Faith Action and the rest of the community, and meet with Faith Action as appropriate on your progress regarding your commitments made here today?

YES!