

SIRLC Candidate Questionnaire

2019



From the Constitution of the Southern Indiana Regional Labor Council

The Southern Indiana Regional Labor Council is an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations representing organized labor locals and chapters across 42 counties in Southern Indiana. The objective of our organization is to promote the principles of the AFL-CIO throughout the geographic area covered by the charter of our council.

Our objectives include:

- a) Serving as a means of exchanging and promoting information among our affiliated bodies.
- b) Providing aid, cooperation, and assistance to affiliated locals, organizations, and candidates.
- c) Supporting and promoting legislation favorable to and oppose legislation detrimental to the interest of workers and organized labor.
- d) Encouraging workers and individuals to register to vote, exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities, and perform their part in the political process of state, local, and national government.
- e) Undertaking all efforts to ensure diversity of representation in all levels of the organization and movement.
- f) Engaging in activities consistent with the objectives and principles of the AFL-CIO and the movement to organize workers throughout all industries and walks of life.

We strive towards achieving these goals and commit ourselves to building programs and structures that enable us to conduct year-round mobilization efforts that win elections, advance a legislative agenda that supports working families, and grow the labor movement in our area and state.

Organized Labor and Candidates

Organized labor and candidates have a long history of supporting one another in order to reach similar objectives. Labor has supported candidates through actions such as:

- a) Door to door voter contact.
- b) Phone calls to voters to increase name recognition and to turn out the vote.
- c) Member-to member contact between fellow union members and union households.
- d) Local news and social media exposure.
- e) Letter-writing campaigns.
- f) Financial donations.

Candidates can support the labor movement in ways such as:

- a) Printing campaign materials through union print shops.
- b) Reaching out to and introducing your candidacy to local unions in your district.
- c) Promoting legislation that strengthens workers' rights and Organized Labor.
- d) Opposing harmful legislation such as Right to Work and the repeal of the Common Construction Wage.
- e) Standing with and promoting Organized Labor at events such as legislative demonstrations and strikes.
- f) Encourage your local government and political party to incorporate labor in leadership positions such as committees, boards, and precinct chairmanships.

Candidate Information

1. Name- [Isabel Piedmont-Smith](#)

2. Office sought- [Bloomington City Council Representative, District 5](#)

3. Incumbent (Yes or No)- [Yes](#)

4. Area/District running in- [District 5, Bloomington](#)

5. Party affiliation- [Democrat](#)

6. Current occupation- [Department Administrator, Dept of French & Italian, IU-Bloomington](#)

7. Past or current labor affiliations- [None](#)

8. Past labor endorsements- [2007: AFSCME Local 832 and IBEW Local 725](#)

9. Other current endorsements- [Monroe County Black Democratic Caucus, Monroe County Democratic Women's Caucus, Democracy for Monroe County](#)

10. Groups associated with- [Monroe County Democratic Women's Caucus, South Central Indiana Jobs With Justice](#)

11. Number of doors knocked- [About 900 so far](#)

12. Money raised in current election cycle- [\\$3,360](#)

13. Are your campaign material union printed (Yes/No)- [Yard signs-YES](#)

14. Name of candidate website- www.piedmontsmith.us

15. Social media pages affiliated with campaign- www.facebook.com/piedmontsmith
[Twitter: @PiedmontSmith](#) [Instagram: IsabelPiedmontSmith](#)

16. Campaign address- [PO Box 1163, Bloomington, IN 47402](#)

17. Campaign committee name- [Piedmont-Smith for City Council](#)

18. Email Contact- piedmontsmith4council@gmail.com

19. Phone Contact- [812-219-2788 \(Isabel's cell phone\)](#)

Issues

1. Will you support the rights of employees to form or join a union and bargain collectively with employers? **Yes**
2. In the above question, do you make a distinction between private sector and public sector workers? **No**
3. What are your views on the privatization of jobs that are presently done by government employees? **Not a good idea. If we privatize jobs, the private company will be motivated by profit, and thus in the end taxpayers will pay more money to get the same amount of work done.**
4. What should be local government's role in the availability and affordability of quality daycare? **If fiscally possible, local governments should support quality daycare for children and elderly people. This could be done by facilitating collaboration between agencies, providing free or low-rent space, or providing direct subsidies to low-income families.**
5. If not already in place, would you support domestic partner benefit for government employees? **Yes**
6. What do you think should be local government's role in economic development?
Local government should support locally-owned businesses as they develop and expand in the community, arts and culture non-profits that add to the quality of life, a quality parks and recreation program, and basic infrastructure investments that attract and retain employers and employees.
7. What are your criteria for granting tax abatements?
The business receiving the tax abatement must provide a significant number of jobs that pay a living wage or higher, must not harm the natural or built environment near their business, and must provide significant investment that will, in the long run, increase tax revenues. In place of a significant number of new employees, I would consider the provision of housing that is affordable to people at or below 80% of the Area Median Income as fulfilling my criteria for a tax abatement. In all cases, the specific details must be analyzed, and benefits weighed against loss of tax revenue by the city.

8. Are you willing to tie the payment of a living wage, full time work, and employer provided health care as conditions for granting tax incentives to businesses?

Yes

9. Are you in favor of tax abatement documentation being verified?

Yes

10. Do you support binding arbitration for public employees?

No, I think employees should have access to the court system in case of disputes.

11. How do you plan to involve organized labor in the district in which you seek to represent?

Since I am running in a small district race in Bloomington, I am not sure how I would involve organized labor. I would be grateful for any volunteers from organized labor to assist me with door-to-door campaigning, and I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with any labor group in Bloomington to discuss issues relevant to city government.

12. What issues do you find threatening to organized labor, if any?

Oh, so many! The so-called "Right to Work" legislation that has been adopted by many states is a threat. The increasing requirements for binding arbitration for workers rather than allowing them access to the court system in the case of discrimination, harassment, or other labor issues. The decreasing percentage of schools that are public as more and more states adopt voucher programs and programs that allow private colleges to sponsor charter schools.

13. How have you demonstrated your support for organized labor throughout your campaign?

Labor issues have not come up in my campaign, so I must admit that I haven't made public statements about labor issues. However, my website does have a statement in support of labor (under the "Issues" tab).

In the past, I worked with the coalition which pushed through the Living Wage Ordinance under the leadership of Andy Ruff here in Bloomington. I also served on the Indiana University Anti-Sweatshop Advisory Committee, 2004-07. This is a group that monitors university licensees' compliance with a code of conduct to ensure that workers producing IU apparel are treated fairly. I have been a member of Jobs

14. How do you plan to further demonstrate your support for organized labor going forward?

With Justice since 2006.
During the budget process for the 2019 city of Bloomington budget, I negotiated with the mayor's administration to bring the wages of ALL Bloomington employees up to a living wage by 2020. The city's living wage ordinance did not include seasonal employees. I plan to bring legislation this year to apply the city's living wage ordinance to seasonal employees, and in the 2020 budget, all seasonal employees will have this wage level. It is tied to the cost of living and is defined in city code.

15. How do you plan to support working families and workers' rights if elected?

I plan to ask for the 2020 city budget to include a subsidy to Bloomington Transit to increase the frequency of bus service, which will help people to get to their jobs without a car. I welcome meetings with workers and/or their representatives to see if there are other ways that I as a city council member can help.

16. Will you support initiatives to increase the number of registered voters and voter participation? If so, what initiatives do you believe will help?

Yes. I have done two voter registration drives this spring: One at Crawford Homes and one at Bloomington High School South. I would like to do further voter registration in District 5, for example at Henderson Court or Walnut Grove apartments, where many low-income people live but not many people are voting.

17. Will you support initiatives to increase the diversity of representation on appointed boards and commissions?

Yes

18. Will you support initiatives for bettering wages, benefits, and working conditions of individuals if elected?

Yes. As I mentioned above, with pressure from myself and a few other Council Members, the mayor's administration has agreed to bring the wages of city seasonal employees up to the living wage level by 2020.

19. Will you oppose any attempts to weaken the rights of workers or organized labor?

Yes

20. Will you strive to include organized labor in proposed building projects and legislation?

I am not sure I have any role in including organized labor in city building projects. Certainly legislation that affects workers in the building trades should be written with participation of those workers and/or their representatives.

21. Would you support and work towards penalizing employers that violate workers' rights?

Yes.

22. What are the main issues in which your campaign has and plans to focus on?

- 1) Using public funds responsibly.
- 2) Implementing environmentally sound practices.
- 3) Building an inclusive, compassionate community.

23. If not already in place, would you support a requirement that contractors meet minimum criteria defining a “responsible contractor” in order to be considered for local government contracts? Criteria could include past performance, having proper insurance coverage, adherence to safety and labor laws, and other employee standards?

Andy Ruff sponsored legislation a few years ago to add a responsible bidder ordinance to the City of Bloomington municipal code, and I co-sponsored this legislation. You can find it here: https://library.municode.com/in/bloomington/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT2ADPE_CH2.31REBIOR

24. If applicable and if elected, would you support a local government ordinance or policy prohibiting administering random drug/alcohol testing on public employees without **PROBABLE CAUSE?**

This makes sense to me.

25. What is your position on criminal history and credit checks for new employees in the public sector?

I would need to look into this more, but here is my initial reaction: A criminal history check should be conducted for any employee who will have direct access to funds or who will work with children in any way. I don't see why a credit check would be necessary.

26. Would you be willing to participate in:

- A workers’ roundtable Yes
- An in-person or digital townhall? Yes
- Visit worksites or union shops? Yes
- Participate in a picket line or other demonstration? Probably, but it depends on the cause
- Other (Please specify below). I will continue to be involved with Jobs With Justice and attend as many meetings and events as my schedule allows.