

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Candidate Name:	David Chee
Position/Office on the Ballot:	Belmont City Council
Party Affiliation:	Democratic

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE + MATERNAL HEALTH:

1. As federal policies threaten to widen health and economic disparities — particularly through cuts to Medicaid and SNAP — what strategies would you advance at the local level to build a more equitable and cost-effective system of care that ensures all residents can access the services they need, regardless of income or insurance status?

A multifacet approach is needed. State and county officials would be contacted to see what funding they could contribute towards specific shortfalls by council resolution endorsement. Within the purview of the council, any municipal funding would be one time and for dire emergencies but should not be a long term solution as municipalities should not be in the federal shortfall remediation business. Council can also advocate for further funding/charitable donations from nonprofits, commercial, and private sources. The critical step needed for a cost effective system is for communities to share the financial burden as well as sharing the delivery service area in regional, collaborative effort.

2. With rural hospitals in North Carolina already under threat of closure due to rising uncompensated care resulting from cuts to Medicaid, what investments or partnerships would you support at the local level to expand access to primary care, mental health services, and maternal and child health — especially in underserved areas within your municipality?

If underserved areas existed, redistribution of existing resources would certainly be the frontline step. Regional collaboration, as cited above in question 1, would be the next hopefully, resolving step.

3. How would you ensure that community voices — particularly those most impacted by health disparities and barriers to care — are meaningfully included and elevated in shaping local policies and programs aimed at expanding access to healthcare and addressing systemic inequities?

Community voices are always welcome at council meeting during the public speaking time. A comprehensive listening effort on the part of government would also include an interactive city website. These inputs, and other inputs, should be forwarded to an adhoc committee for healthcare services with citizens and business stakeholders set up to address in real time issues.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

1. Do you support ordinances that penalize people for sleeping in public spaces, panhandling, or living in their vehicles? Why or why not?

I would review regional ordinances before supporting or not supporting specific sanctions. I am all about fairness and consistency in regional policies. We cannot allow one extreme of no penalty as there is an inherent safety issue. We cannot penalize with extreme measures either as it does not address the real issue: how does society treat fairly poverty if it can't be eradicated. The answer has always been a safety net, but the question is how much?

2. What is your plan to address homelessness without resorting to criminalization or displacement?

Public housing or short term shelters are possible solutions, however displacement can be a temporary result. A person who becomes homeless cannot have the right to expect he/she can remain in the same locale at the expense of the locale. Preferably, displacement could mean being housed in a neighboring city which has the infrastructure and there is a equitable, shared cost agreement where the originating locale lacks infrastructure.

3. What policies will you support to ensure law enforcement officers in our town are held accountable for the use of deadly force, especially when it results in the injury or death of unarmed individuals?

Law enforcement policy regarding use of deadly force is already governed by state law and policy. Should bodily injury or death result, and wrongful injury has been determined, then state statutes should be invoked as well if the enforcement officer has been found guilty. The need for additional municipal policies, if needed, should coincide with those of neighboring communities, which I have not researched at this time.

DEMOCRACY

1. How will you address underrepresentation in North Carolina's voters—especially among Black communities and young voters ages 18-29?

Two words: hard work. We live in a society of free will where asking those who are underrepresented may still result in indifference at best, a slammed door at worst. I am willing to do the legwork to show the Black American community and young voters of North Carolina that they make a difference in leveraging services and addressing needs if they vote. It starts with conversations and moves up to one activated individual at a time.

2. How will you ensure that state and local district maps reflect fair representation across party, race, and geography?

Fair representation is a very subjective, fluid event. Democracy features a two party spoils system with the landscape subject to gerrymandering. We do not have a proportional representation system like Europe which offers multi party real government participation based on percentage of vote garnered by party. The only legislative solutions which could be overturned are judicial decision, referendum, and legislation by the party in power. The worst we can hope for are: lawmakers who hold themselves accountable to their

constituency, promote fairness, and show the willingness to provide opportunities to those who have never seen one.

3. Would you support legislation to establish a truly independent, non-partisan commission for redistricting, free from legislative influence?

Yes.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

1. What policies will you support to foster innovation and encourage an equitable entrepreneurial environment in the state?

Government contract differ from private contract conducted with businesses in that government has legal safeguards. Any redress of perceived inequity in the private sector and fostering innovation can only be encouraged by government but government cannot interfere. Government fostered innovation has be carefully done and must always be of the greatest possible good to the widest public audience. Consortium spread throughout the state versus individual business involvement would mitigate the barring of competition of subcontractors at the whim of a primary contractor.

2. The NC workforce is dealing with cooling hiring markets and ongoing labor shortages across education, transit, health care, public service and more. What specific initiatives – such as apprenticeships, skills-based hiring, or public-sector retention programs would you support?

A state critical job sector employment program in exchange for reduced tuition repayment for state college graduates could be implemented. A sort of Peace Corps with benefits.

3. Current state legislative budget proposals aim to reduce personal and corporate income tax rates tremendously by 2030. Do you believe such cuts are fiscally responsible given projected revenue shortfalls, or would you oppose accelerating them?

Being a former tax supervisor in a different state, I recognize there is always a tax policy outcome analysis of any tax change. If correctly done, economic stimulus is the result and additional tax revenues will be generated without needing to restore a tax rate.

EDUCATION:

1. Considering the consistent defunding of public education that we have seen over the past several years as a result of poor policy decisions, what is your plan of action to ensure that you are coordinating with the school board to provide the best quality education feasible for students?

The economic demographics of a particular locale in North Carolina will dictate best practice. If revenues are down by legislation or other, then regionalization is an alternative to maximize benefits for education. If revenues are up, save for a rainy day and for capital improvements.

2. Do you support increasing educator pay to meet the national average and reinstating master's and related advanced degree pay?

Increased pay should be an option for individual affluent locales. However, baseball has a luxury tax to support small market teams. State legislation similarly should legislate to provide some equity to lower economic regions. The money could be pooled from state wide education allocations with a reasonable reduction of the locales that chose to pay more for their educators.

3. What is your stance on private school vouchers? Do you support using public funds to fund private school voucher programs?

More data is needed. If public schools are suffering, but only in certain locales, there should be state remedy. If private schools abuse the voucher program, but only in certain locales, there should be state remedy. North Carolina has the flexibility of no collective bargaining in public schools and institutes private school vouchers. As comparison, Massachusetts has collective bargaining in public schools and no private school vouchers. So there is a trade off.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

1. North Carolina faces various water quality challenges, including contamination caused by PFAS, CAFOs, and other forms of industrial and commercial pollution. How do you plan to ensure communities across the state, particularly yours, will have access to clean, safe drinking water?

For the Belmont locale, the Catawba/Wylie water source is part of a waterway bordering other communities and states. In such case, collaborative effort to ensure safety is imperative. Lake Wylie SC, for example, draws its water as well from the source.

2. With recent federal limitations of the IRA and the continual removal of environmentally sound initiatives, as well as the impacts of defunding Medicare and Medicaid, how do you plan to ensure readily and equitable access to healthcare and other resources to ensure community needs are met?

As previously discussed, I am prepared to work on regional, collaborative efforts to tackle any long term shortfalls.

3. Greensboro: What is your stance on the toxic waste site, Bingham Park, located in a predominantly Black neighborhood in Greensboro? Do you support the community's request for full remediation?

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