

Philly NN Endorses Slate of Justice-Seeking Candidates in May 2019 Primary Election

By Margaret Lenzi In Endorsements 27 Mar 2019

Philly NN has endorsed an outstanding group of candidates that have the skills, experience, and vision to reshape city government and change how politics is done for years to come. After an extensive endorsement process and vote by our members, Philly Neighborhood Networks enthusiastically endorses the following candidates:

CITY COUNCIL AT-LARGE ENDORSEMENTS

- **Erika Almirón**
- **Sherrie Cohen**
- **Justin DiBerardinis**
- **Derek Green (incumbent)**
- **Helen Gym (incumbent)**

CITY COUNCIL, 8TH DISTRICT, ENDORSEMENT

- **Tonya Bah**

CITY COMMISSIONER ENDORSEMENTS (oversee the election process)

- **Jen Devor**
- **Kahlil Williams**

We believe that these candidates best represent [Philly NN's progressive principles and values](#). They come from diverse backgrounds and have experience working on issues

ranging from education, immigration, affordable housing, and labor to small business, environment and taxation. Their past work shows that they will be fierce advocates for the types of city programs, legislation and policy that will lift up social and economic justice for all citizens of Philadelphia.

Every one of our **Endorsed City Council Candidates** is pledged to fight for:

\$15 Minimum Wage – Ending the 10-Year Tax Abatement – Creating a Public Bank – Public Financing of Elections – Increasing the Affordable Housing Trust Fund – Ending Stop and Frisk – Fully and Fairly Funding Our Public Schools

Both of our **Endorsed City Commissioner Candidates** are for **aggressively registering new voters in neglected communities, and formaking our voting systems secure and efficient.**

Inspired by the same energy that created a blue wave nationwide in 2018, our endorsed candidates herald a New Progressive Wave in City government in 2019. But their opposition is fierce and well-funded and our candidates need your help and support to bring them home. Please let us know you'll be doing your part by [contacting Philly NN's Field Organizer](#), Tim Brown. He will plug you right into the fight.

HERE'S MORE ABOUT PHILLY NN'S ENDORSED CANDIDATES

COUNCIL AT-LARGE

ERIKA ALMIRÓN – Almirón has been a central figure in the immigrants' rights movement in Philadelphia and has a proven record of organizing for real change. As executive director of Juntos, she was at the forefront of pressuring the city to implement the most progressive sanctuary city model in the country. That model has since been replicated by over 200 municipalities around the country. And Almirón's commitment to those perceived to be without power was apparent long before her work with Juntos. She previously spent years working for the rights of students, women working in sweatshops on the U.S./Mexican

border and at Planned Parenthood as a counselor supporting women's access healthcare. She will be a dauntless fighter for all those who are marginalized from her first day in Council.

SHERRIE COHEN – Cohen's lifelong dedication to movements for racial, economic, social and gender justice is exemplified by her organizing and advocacy work on so many fronts. As an activist, in recent years she's been fighting for tenant rights, affordable housing, full funding for education, an end to cash bail, women's liberation, queer liberation, and a fair and equitable city budget supported by taxes that are not balanced on the backs of poor and working people. As an attorney, she has represented tenants fighting evictions and lead paint poisoning, and communities fighting to save their libraries and essential services. Recognizing the environmental crisis facing us, she fully supports the Green New Deal and is committed to moving Philly towards 100% renewable energy by 2030. Sherrie Cohen's progressive values, experience and past work show that as a member of City Council, she will continue to support legislation and policies that build a fair, equitable and inclusive Philadelphia.

JUSTIN DIBERARDINIS – DiBerardinis' track record and experience as an organizer in working class and impoverished communities and, as a Council staffer, developing legislation promoting progressive taxation, land trust development, and corporate accountability, will make him a Council Person we can trust to advance the peoples interests over vested interests. His inspiring campaign calls for the enactment of a New Deal for Philadelphia — it's about growing the public sector and supporting living wage employment to fully staff neglected programs that serve neighborhood people in schools, parks, libraries, and recreation centers. He is also intent on finishing the work he started on Council staff to reconstruct our tax code to support working people and small business, and making big business – in and out of the City- pay their full share. He has built a broad and diverse coalition of supporters that will enable him to mobilize public support for his unique vision and bring it to fruition.

DEREK GREEN – Green is the leading small and community-based business advocate on City Council. An innovative thinker in this domain, he is interested in trying new and promising policies in this field that make him an irreplaceable force for those important interests. In particular, he has championed two policies that make him stand out. First is the

promotion of worker and community-based co-ops. Green found scarce dollars in the City budget to fund a project that provides technical assistance to co-op start-ups all around the City. And, recognizing that co-ops and other community and minority owned businesses have an overwhelming need for affordable credit, Green has been working for three years to get the City to create a Philadelphia Public bank that would take Philadelphia's credit dependence away from the moguls of Wall Street and replace them with an institution that puts Philadelphia first. Green's record is also noteworthy for seeking to bring real democracy to our imperfect one, by promoting public financing of elections for Mayor and City Council.

HELEN GYM – During her first term on Council, Gym emerged as an effective leader who knows how to organize and win progressive change: passing the nation's most expansive Fair Workweek law; restoring nurses, counselors, social workers and bilingual staff to our public schools; and winning millions of dollars to support youth programs and establishing a legal defense fund for tenants facing eviction. Every step of the way, Gym enlists community in her legislative battles, recognizing that only in that way can the forces of the status quo be overcome. Going forward, she is committed to securing housing as a human right; strengthening our public schools for our children and teachers; fighting for better wages and jobs; and demanding a justice system that works for every Philadelphian. We can rely on her to engage in those fights, and, based on her amazing one-term track record, to be effective in all of them. A long-time activist, she has exhibited the dedication, energy and ability to be an outstanding advocate on Council for educational equity, economic opportunity, and environmental justice.

CITY COUNCIL, 8THDISTRICT

TONYA BAH– A long-time activist, she has exhibited the dedication, energy and ability to be an outstanding advocate on Council for educational equity, economic opportunity, and environmental justice. Recognizing her steadfast advocacy on education, she was nominated to the School Board by the Our City Our Schools coalition. Working for environmental justice, she opposed the Nicetown gas plant and lead contamination in our water. She will fight for development that serves the expressed needs of the community. Tonya Bah is a progressive Democrat who will put people first, over profit, and fight every day for a Philadelphia that works for all of us.

CITY COMMISSIONER

JEN DEVOR – Jen Devor has the perfect blend of experience, skills, and passionate commitment to protecting voting rights that will make her an outstanding City Commissioner overseeing the election system in Philadelphia. A published author on electoral reform, she has also been civically engaged on a personal level for several years as a block captain, committee person and poll worker. Her volunteer engagement also included winning a Committee of 70's Buchholz Fellowship, focused on non-partisan initiatives to increase voter turnout. Out of all that experience, she has developed a raft of innovative strategies to improve our electoral system and citizen engagement with it. Voting security is one of her highest priorities leading her to support paper ballots with optical scanners which experts believe is the most secure, efficient, and cost-effective way to vote. She is dedicated to a more transparent and responsive office and will work tirelessly and skillfully to increase voter turnout and empower Philadelphians to register, vote, and ensure their voice is heard and protected.

KAHLIL WILLIAMS – Having spent his entire professional career working on voting rights and elections, Williams is well prepared to hit the ground running — to effectively run the election process in Philly, educate the voters and increase turnout. His extensive experience in the election field includes working as a congressional fellow to help reauthorize the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and serving as a policy analyst at the Brennan Center for Justice, specializing in redistricting reform, campaign finance reform, and restoration of voting rights to individuals with felony convictions. As an attorney, he has trained and supervised hundreds of volunteers in Election Protection programs. With all this work under his belt, Williams has a sophisticated understanding of the election process and the ability to address any problems that occur on election day. In addition, he has innovative ideas for educating voters on the electoral process, on expanding voter registration programs focused on outreach to low turnout populations, and providing properly trained and qualified persons to fully staff the election day operation throughout the city. Williams' experience, abilities, and skills will make him an outstanding City Commissioner who will protect the right of every Philadelphian to vote.

