



Kansas Statewide
Homeless Coalition

2024 Survey for Kansas Public Leaders and Candidates

Name

AONYA KENDRICK BARNETT

Office:

Kansas House of Representatives

Party

Democrat

District

85

Home City

WICHITA

Ballot City

WICHITA

Policy and Strategy:

Kansas Housing Resource Corporation's 2021 Housing Needs Assessment found that "A shortage of quality, affordable housing is an undeniable barrier to economic growth and development in any community, and particularly in rural communities in Kansas." How likely are you to support increasing funding for affordable housing development?

Very Likely

Comments:

I am highly likely to support increasing funding for affordable housing development. The Kansas Housing Resource Corporation's 2021 Housing Needs Assessment highlights a critical issue: the shortage of quality, affordable housing, which significantly hinders economic growth and development, especially in rural communities. Ensuring that every Kansan has access to affordable, safe, and quality housing is essential for the well-being of our communities and the overall health of our economy. By increasing funding for affordable housing, we can create more opportunities for families to thrive, attract new businesses, and stimulate local economies. This aligns with my broader campaign goals of enhancing public health, promoting economic stability, and ensuring equitable access to essential resources for all Kansans.

Inadequate access to mental health and substance use treatment programs contributes to homelessness in Kansas. How likely are you to vote to expand mental health and substance abuse treatment programs?

Very Likely

Comments:

I am highly likely to vote to expand mental health and substance abuse treatment programs. Inadequate access to these essential services is a significant factor contributing to homelessness in Kansas. By expanding these programs, we can provide critical support to individuals struggling with mental health and substance use disorders, helping them regain stability and reduce the risk of homelessness. Investing in mental health and substance abuse treatment not only improves individual lives but also strengthens our communities by addressing underlying issues that lead to homelessness and other social challenges. This commitment is consistent with my campaign's focus on public health, harm reduction, and providing equitable access to necessary services for all Kansans.

How likely are you to be in favor of limiting annual rental increases?

Very Likely

Comments:

I am very likely to be in favor of limiting annual rental increases. Affordable and stable housing is crucial for the well-being of Kansans, and excessive rental increases can lead to housing instability and financial strain for many families. Implementing measures to limit annual rental increases can help protect tenants from sudden, unaffordable rent hikes, ensuring that more people can remain in their homes and maintain their financial security. This aligns with my commitment to promoting equitable access to affordable housing and supporting economic stability for all residents of Kansas.

Kansas has no statewide plan that comprehensively addresses homelessness. How likely are you to support the implementation of a statewide affordable housing plan to address homelessness?

Very Likely

Comments:

I am highly likely to support the implementation of a statewide affordable housing plan to address homelessness. Having a comprehensive plan is essential for effectively tackling homelessness and ensuring that all Kansans have access to safe and stable housing. A statewide approach can coordinate resources, align efforts across different regions, and address the root causes of homelessness more effectively. By investing in affordable housing and supportive services, we can create sustainable solutions that provide stability and improve the quality of life for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This commitment is in line with my campaign's focus on enhancing public health, promoting economic stability, and ensuring equitable access to essential services for all Kansans.

How likely are you to advocate to allow for more affordable housing developments in urban and suburban areas?

Very Likely

Comments:

I am very likely to advocate for more affordable housing developments in urban and suburban areas. Access to affordable housing is a critical issue that affects the quality of life and economic stability of many Kansans. By promoting the development of affordable housing in both urban and suburban areas, we can ensure that more people have access to safe and affordable homes close to job opportunities, schools, healthcare, and other essential services. This approach supports diverse and inclusive communities and helps reduce the pressures that lead to housing instability and homelessness. Advocating for affordable housing developments aligns with my commitment to promoting equitable access to housing, enhancing public health, and fostering economic growth in our communities.

How likely are you to be in favor of establishing a state-funded rental assistance program to stabilize low-income renters and support property owners?

Very Likely

Comments:

I am highly likely to favor establishing a state-funded rental assistance program to stabilize low-income renters and support property owners. A rental assistance program can provide crucial support to individuals and families facing financial hardships, helping them maintain their housing and avoid eviction. At the same time, it supports property owners by ensuring they receive consistent rental income. This dual benefit can lead to more stable and healthy communities, reduce homelessness, and promote economic stability. Supporting such a program aligns with my commitment to equitable access to housing, financial stability, and improving the overall quality of life for all Kansans.

How likely are you to support legislation or programs to provide legal assistance to tenants facing eviction?

Very Likely

Comments:

I am highly likely to support legislation or programs to provide legal assistance to tenants facing eviction. Ensuring that tenants have access to legal representation can help protect their rights, prevent unjust evictions, and provide them with the necessary resources to navigate complex legal processes. Legal assistance can also help address issues such as inadequate housing conditions, discriminatory practices, and other challenges that tenants may face. Supporting such programs aligns with my commitment to promoting housing stability, protecting vulnerable populations, and ensuring equitable access to justice for all Kansans.

How likely are you to support increasing funding for domestic violence shelters and services to prevent homelessness?

Very Likely

Comments:

I am very likely to support increasing funding for domestic violence shelters and services to prevent homelessness. Domestic violence is a significant cause of homelessness, particularly among women and children. By increasing funding for shelters and support services, we can provide essential resources and safe spaces for survivors, helping them escape abusive situations and rebuild their lives. Ensuring that these individuals have access to housing and supportive services is crucial for their safety and well-being. This commitment aligns with my focus on public health, safety, and ensuring that all Kansans have access to the resources they need to lead stable and healthy lives.

What funding sources will you prioritize or advocate for to support homelessness programs and services? (Check all that apply)

Federal grants and programs (e.g., HUD Continuum of Care, Emergency Solutions Grants)

State Government funding initiatives

Local government budgets and funding allocations

Private donations and philanthropic foundations

Corporate partnerships and sponsorships

Community fundraising events and campaigns

Social impact bonds and other innovative financing mechanisms

Public-private partnerships

Tax revenue initiatives (e.g., bonds, levies specifically for housing and homeless services)

Comments:

By diversifying funding sources, we can create a more sustainable and comprehensive approach to addressing homelessness and providing the necessary support services.

Housing Solutions

Kansas does not have enough shelter space; nearly two thousand Kansans sleep outside or in their cars in dangerous weather conditions. How important is it to increase funding and capacity for emergency shelters to meet immediate needs?

Very Important

Comments:

Increasing funding and capacity for emergency shelters to meet immediate needs is critically important, especially for the nearly two thousand Kansans who sleep outside or in their cars in dangerous weather conditions. Ensuring that every Kansan has access to safe and secure shelter is a fundamental responsibility. Emergency shelters provide essential support, protecting vulnerable individuals from extreme weather, offering immediate relief, and reducing the number of people sleeping in unsafe conditions. Expanding shelter capacity also enables the provision of additional services such as meals, medical care, mental health support, and connections to long-term housing resources, thereby improving overall community safety and public health. Addressing the immediate need for emergency shelter is a crucial step in a broader strategy to end homelessness in Kansas, aligning with my commitment to ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of all Kansans. This commitment is especially relevant to our campaign's focus on enhancing public health and promoting equitable access to essential services for everyone in our community.

How important is it to develop more transitional housing programs to bridge the gap between homelessness and permanent housing?

Very Important

Comments:

Developing more transitional housing programs to bridge the gap between homelessness and permanent housing is extremely important. Transitional housing provides essential support for individuals and families transitioning out of homelessness by offering stable, temporary housing along with critical services such as job training, counseling, and life skills development. This approach helps people stabilize their lives, build the skills and resources needed for independent living, and move towards permanent housing solutions. By investing in transitional housing programs, we can create a more effective and comprehensive response to homelessness, ensuring that individuals and families have the support they need to achieve long-term stability and success. This commitment aligns with my campaign's focus on promoting public health and safety and ensuring equitable access to essential services for all Kansans.

How important is it to expand permanent supportive housing options with integrated services for long-term stability?

Very Important

Comments:

Expanding permanent supportive housing options with integrated services for long-term stability is critically important. Permanent supportive housing provides a stable, long-term housing solution for individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness, often coupled with integrated services such as mental health care, substance use treatment, and case management. These comprehensive services address the underlying issues that contribute to homelessness, helping residents maintain their housing and improve their overall quality of life. By investing in and expanding these housing options, we can significantly reduce chronic homelessness, promote long-term stability, and enhance community well-being. This approach aligns with my commitment to ensuring that all Kansans have access to the resources and support they need to lead stable and healthy lives, reinforcing my campaign's focus on public health, safety, and equitable access to essential services.

How important is it to implement a low barrier approach that prioritizes permanent housing with support services?

Very Important

Comments:

Implementing a low barrier approach that prioritizes permanent housing with support services is critically important. A low barrier approach removes obstacles that often prevent individuals experiencing homelessness from accessing housing, such as strict sobriety requirements or extensive documentation. By prioritizing permanent housing first, coupled with support services like mental health care, substance use treatment, and case management, we can provide immediate stability and address the root causes of homelessness. This model, known as Housing First, has been proven to be highly effective in reducing homelessness and promoting long-term stability. Adopting this approach ensures that the most vulnerable members of our community receive the help they need without unnecessary barriers, aligning with my commitment to equitable access to essential services, public health, and safety for all Kansans.

How important is it to collaborate on the local level to ensure a coordinated response that addresses homelessness?

Very Important

Comments:

Collaborating on the local level to ensure a coordinated response that addresses homelessness is extremely important. Local collaboration allows for a comprehensive and unified approach, bringing together various stakeholders including government agencies, non-profits, community organizations, and businesses. This coordinated effort ensures that resources are used efficiently, services are not duplicated, and gaps in support are identified and addressed. By working together, communities can develop tailored solutions that meet the unique needs of their homeless populations, improve service delivery, and create a more robust support network. This approach aligns with my commitment to fostering partnerships, enhancing public health, and ensuring that all Kansans have access to the resources and support they need to achieve stability and well-being.

How important is it to use data-driven strategies to allocate resources based on current demand and long-term outcomes?

Very Important

Comments:

Using data-driven strategies to allocate resources based on current demand and long-term outcomes is critically important. Data-driven approaches enable us to understand the specific needs and trends within homeless populations, ensuring that resources are directed where they are most needed and will be most effective. By analyzing data, we can identify patterns, track the effectiveness of various interventions, and make informed decisions about how to best allocate funding and support services. This ensures a more efficient and impactful use of resources, leading to better long-term outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness. Implementing data-driven strategies aligns with my commitment to evidence-based policy-making, enhancing public health, and ensuring that all Kansans receive the support they need to achieve stability and well-being.

How important is it to create a flexible funding source that allows communities to address local needs?

Very Important

Comments:

Creating a flexible funding source that allows communities to address local needs is extremely important. Flexibility in funding enables communities to respond quickly and effectively to their unique challenges and opportunities, ensuring that resources can be allocated to the most pressing issues as they arise.

Local needs can vary widely, and a one-size-fits-all approach often falls short. By providing flexible funding, we empower local leaders and organizations to tailor their strategies and interventions to the specific needs of their populations, fostering innovation and improving the overall impact of homelessness and housing programs. This approach aligns with my commitment to local empowerment, public health, and ensuring that all Kansans have access to the resources and support they need to thrive.

Collaboration and Partnerships:

Will you establish regular communication channels with local nonprofits to address homelessness?

Yes

Comments:

Establishing these communication channels is a key part of my commitment to collaboration, public health, and ensuring that all Kansans have access to the resources and support they need to achieve stability and well-being.

Do you plan to participate in a workgroup or advisory council that addresses homelessness that includes representatives from key stakeholders throughout Kansas?

Yes

Comments:

This involvement aligns with my dedication to public health, collaboration, and ensuring equitable access to essential services for all Kansans.

How important is it for state entities to collaborate on homelessness initiatives?

Very Important

Comments:

Collaboration among state entities on homelessness initiatives is vital for creating comprehensive, efficient, and effective solutions. It allows for the pooling of resources, coordinated policies, and a holistic approach to addressing the various factors contributing to homelessness.

Employment and Education:

How likely are you to be in favor of creating state incentives for businesses that hire individuals experiencing homelessness?

Very Likely

Comments:

I am highly in favor of creating state incentives for businesses that hire individuals experiencing homelessness. These incentives can provide vital job opportunities and help reduce homelessness in our community.

Will you support job training and vocational programs tailored to the needs of homeless individuals?

Yes

Comments:

I fully support job training and vocational programs tailored to the needs of homeless individuals. Empowering people with the skills and opportunities they need is crucial for breaking the cycle of

homelessness and building a stronger community.

Do you support the creation of a statewide initiative to simplify the process of obtaining a state ID for homeless and low-income individuals?

Yes

Comments:

I strongly support the creation of a statewide initiative to simplify the process of obtaining a state ID for homeless and low-income individuals. A state ID is essential for accessing vital services, employment, and housing. Let's remove barriers and promote inclusivity.

Health and Well-being:

Do you advocate for Medicaid expansion to increase healthcare coverage for low-income individuals?

Yes

Comments:

I strongly advocate for Medicaid expansion to increase healthcare coverage for low-income individuals. Expanding Medicaid is essential for ensuring that everyone has access to the healthcare they need, promoting healthier communities and reducing healthcare disparities.

How critical is Medicaid expansion for increasing healthcare coverage for low-income individuals in your view?

Very Critical

Comments:

I strongly advocate for Medicaid expansion to increase healthcare coverage for low-income individuals. Expanding Medicaid is essential for ensuring that everyone has access to the healthcare they need, promoting healthier communities and reducing healthcare disparities.

Will you support the integration of healthcare services within shelters and housing programs?

Yes

Comments:

I will support the integration of healthcare services within shelters and housing programs. Providing comprehensive healthcare in these settings is crucial for addressing the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness and promoting overall well-being.