

Saunteel Jenkins

Age: 38

Current Occupation: Program Director

Education: Wayne State University, 1997 BSW, 1998 MSW

Felony Convictions: None

Campaign Website: SaunteelJenkins.com

Campaign Contact Number: 313-887-7792

Why are you running for Detroit City Council?

Detroit is experiencing the greatest challenges we've faced since the great depression. We're also facing a leadership crisis. We need leadership on city council who understands the issues and can make tough decisions. I have the qualifications and character needed on city council to help turn the city around.

I have a diverse professional background, which includes corporate, non-profit and government experience. All of which have prepared me well to play a constructive role on the city council.

My greatest preparation came from working with former City Council President Maryann Mahaffey. I have in-depth knowledge of the charter mandated roles and responsibilities of Detroit City Council, including the budget process, ordinance process, and the contracting process. We have no more time to waste and I'm ready to hit the ground running.

More than any of the above, I am running because I love this City. We must have new leadership who is dedicated to serving the public, not serving themselves.

What are your top 3 priorities for Detroit? *

1. Attracting and retaining jobs. Many of the problems our city faces are a direct or indirect result of poverty and unemployment.

To begin to address many of our problems City Council must help create and retain jobs in Detroit. I would start by making city government a place that welcomes new business and encourages the continued success/growth of businesses already operating here in the city.

We often hear politicians speak about the need for jobs, then turn around and tell business owners we don't need them here because they don't live in the city, or they don't look like "us". Government jobs on every level of government continue to disappear as budget constraints force workforce reductions. The reality is we cannot offer jobs to citizens, without having the businesses that create the jobs.

2. Stabilizing the city's finances. The city budget is perhaps City Council's greatest responsibility. That responsibility must be taken seriously. We have a \$300 million deficit and no major changes have been made to address the deficit. I would push for a structural and forensic audit of every city department in order to eliminate waste, repetition and corruption. I would also look to other city's who have gone through similar challenges as Detroit to learn how we can move forward and provide quality city services with a reduced tax base.

3. Creating a safe environment for our children to live and learn. Reducing the violence in our community will require a comprehensive set of programs that address several causes and risk factors for violence, and it will require a long-term commitment at every level in the community. I will form a Youth Task Force to focus on reducing youth violence and creating safe afterschool activities for our children. The task force will include stakeholders from the grassroots, business, labor and faith-based communities.

What have been your 2 greatest contributions to the public good? *

1. Currently, I'm serving as the Program Director of a residential substance abuse treatment program for men. Our slogan is, "Saving Families...One Father At A Time." For every man we help there is a mother who no longer has to take care of her children alone, or an elderly parent that now has a son to cut grass and shovel snow, or a child who can grow up with a father. We provide a much needed service in the community and I am proud to be a part of it.

2. I am also proud of the work I did with Maryann Mahaffey. I worked on some key issues including: casino development agreements; housing development projects; business development projects; homelessness; predatory lending; and many other relevant issues. The most important lesson I learned during my tenure in Maryann's office was the necessity of an open and honest process within government. Even when opposing an issue, the process must be one of integrity.

What is the unique characteristic that makes you stand out among the 167 candidates running for City Council?

I am the only 1 of 167 candidates who was trained by one of the best City Council members in the history of this city, Maryann Mahaffey. My campaign has proven that I'm a coalition builder because I've been able to bring leaders in the grassroots, labor, business and faith-based communities together to support my candidacy.

Finally, my diverse professional career in non-profit, for-profit, government and starting my own business give me a well-rounded perspective that's needed on City Council.