**Kate Monteleone - candidate Illinois 50th House Representative**

**1. What is your experience in supporting anti-racism?**

My professional experience has been in large nonprofit organizations where I confronted the politics of poverty, which in my view, is linked to racism. The social supports that all people need to thrive are access to healthcare, education, affordable housing in safe communities and a healthy environment. These issues are the focus of my campaign for State Representative in the 50th House District.

**2. What racial inequities do you see in your district?**

Right now I see the impact of COVID-19 devastating communities of color in my district. In fact, there is a case of wrongful death in Aurora where a woman/mother died of COVID that she contracted from her husband who worked in a meat packing plant without proper distancing, personal protection gear, and sanitization. And, I see police departments in communities of color becoming more militarized; not more effective. These issues are just the tip of the iceberg.

**3. What policies and actions will your office develop to address each of the following racial justice issues:**

**Housing Inequalities**

I have not yet developed a position on housing.

**Environmental Justice**

I support the Clean Energy Jobs Act—the very legislation that was blocked by ComEd. Illinois must eliminate dependency on fossil fuels, particularly coal which contaminates the air we breathe with over 80 toxic chemicals. Communities of color are the most severely impacted due to physical proximity to power plants. The health cost of the high levels of pollution is huge—asthma, COPD and other lung diseases, heart disease, and cancer. The goal of CEJA is to become carbon neutral first and then shift to clean, renewable power generation. Clean energy jobs will help facilitate our economic recovery and ensuring a diverse pool of skilled workers to perform those jobs is essential.

**Criminal Justice**

I recognize the need to end the school to prison path that too many Black and Brown youth are caught in. I have not yet developed a position on the best way forward.

**Healthcare Equity**

Having worked in health care organizations for many years, I know that a Black woman diagnosed with breast cancer is twice as likely to die, than her White counterpart. And Black women are far more likely to die in childbirth than white women. These are horrifying realities and a direct result of being denied access to health care. I am promoting an affordable public option insurance program that allows people to buy-in to the public insurance to address this situation.

**Educational Inequities**

Educational inequities result when school funding falls to local communities. The Illinois Constitution mandates that the state be the primary source of support to public education, yet the state has failed its responsibility for years. Poorly resourced communities are simply unable to generate the necessary resources to ensure quality education and the state must step up to level the playing field. I support passage of the Fair Tax amendment as a step toward increased revenue and more equitable funding for public education. I also reject diverting scarce public resources to private and religious schools who select their students.

**Voter Suppression**

The 50th House District has been designed through gerrymandering to be a safe Republican seat. The result is an incumbent who could run unopposed. Nothing signals that a vote doesn’t matter more clearly. Having no challenger and no choice is a way to suppress turnout and the vote. I entered this race specifically to give voters a choice in their representation.

**4. What are the racial and gender demographics of your campaign team and/or your staff?**

I do not have a staff. My committee leadership consists of myself, my husband and my son. Among my engaged volunteers, there are three Black people who are distributing lit and writing postcards for my campaign. In terms of gender, my volunteers are roughly 70 - 75% women.

**5. As an elected official, what other specific actions will you take to reduce racial inequities and promote racial justice?**

As a society we must tackle racial injustice by solving poverty. I have addressed the pathway I would follow to achieve equitable health care, education, and environment above. I recognize the need for a plan to focus on housing and criminal justice, but have not yet developed plans in those areas.

**Martha Paschke - candidate for Illinois House District 65th**

**1. What is your experience in supporting anti-racism?**

I serve on the Social Justice committee at my church where we participated in the Chicago Regional Organizing Against Racism training in an effort to work to grow in our anti-racism efforts as an institution and as members of a majority white community. I have also engaged with local government when racist sentiments crept into the conversation about bringing affordable housing to Geneva. And I co-lead an organization whose members have and continue to engage in anti-racist initiatives like our recent Black Lives Matter sign sales that raised almost $5000 to support the Our Neighborhoods Empowered organization in Elgin.

**2. What racial inequities do you see in your district?**

It is hard to ignore the whiteness in this district that has been created through decades of ongoing systemic racism and the policies that support it. There is a severe lack of housing diversity made especially noticeable by this district’s gerrymandering to be a ‘red’ district. It is 78.5% White, with the majority of any racial diversity concentrated in the pockets of Elgin and Pingree Grove that have made themselves more welcoming to those populations. In addition to the overall population makeup, we know that the prison population of our county further reflects the decades of over-policing and lack of adequate access to resources aimed at addressing recidivism of Black and Brown populations.

**3. What policies and actions will your office develop to address each of the following racial justice issues:**

**Housing Inequalities**

We need to establish a system to hold municipalities accountable for meeting the minimum of 10% affordable housing already mandated by the state.

**Environmental Justice**

We need to work hard to ensure that resources are available to put an end to any and all pollution of the land, air, and water - pollution that is known to unequally impact neighborhoods that are primarily home to POC. We also need to ensure that POC are prioritized for job training for new ‘green’ jobs.

**Criminal Justice**

I’d like to get rid of cash bonds which overwhelmingly and negatively impact Black women. Defelonize drug possession - make it a misdemeanor instead. Focus funding on violence prevention services that are proven to break the cycle that leads to mass incarceration of Black men. Look at ways to institute citizen review boards to oversee police misconduct cases.

**Healthcare Equity**

We need to address the way that Medicaid is credentialed and paid in order to bring more providers on board. I’ve seen firsthand how difficult it can be for folks on Medicaid to locate treatment (especially mental health). We need to work to encourage and incentivise young Black and Brown people to enter the medical field, as we know that people feel more comfortable being treated (and therefore more likely to seek treatment) by someone who understands their unique cultural experiences. And we need to look at the practice models we are using to streamline care - for example combining mental and physical healthcare in one office to open up treatment options and allow for collaborative care. And because it is a special passion of mine, I want to work to expand access to and encourage training of more Black and Brown midwives and doulas to help work to bring down the devastating maternal mortality rates we are currently experiencing.

**Educational Inequities**

We need to ensure that our state steps up to properly fund education to both boost equity and to remove the burden from property tax payers. Our overreliance on property taxes to support local school funding has driven us to a point of gross inequality that adversely affects our populations of Black and Brown children.

**Voter Suppression**

While we do not see voter suppression to the extent it is seen in many other states, we do need to carefully assess any obstacles that may exist especially in Black and Brown communities. This year due to the pandemic, we have seen a number of measures including an expanded push for Vote By Mail, Early Voting expansion, and the school holiday on Election Day, all of which improve access to voting. I would like to see at least some of these measures be made permanent, with an added look into voter education to improve understanding about how each of these function as I have run into a great deal of confusion amongst various populations as I make voter outreach calls.

**4. What are the racial and gender demographics of your campaign team and/or your staff?**

My campaign team can be viewed here: https://martha4il65.com/team-martha/ I am incredibly proud of the team that has formed in support of my candidacy. They come from a broad range of backgrounds, are mostly women, and demonstrate my commitment to diverse representation.

**5. As an elected official, what other specific actions will you take to reduce racial inequities and promote racial justice?**

I think I covered most everything, but am eager to learn of any and all opportunities to tackle this very real and very significant brokenness in our country.

**Paul Stoddard - candidate Illinois House Representative District 70th**

**1. What is your experience in supporting anti-racism?**

To be honest, although I have always been a supporter of equal rights for all, I had been too much on the sidelines until the recent protests. But having attended various marches, protests, and town halls, and having had the chance to listen to the stories being told, and talking with those telling them, I have started to see actions I can take. So far I have recommended that DeKalb County and the city of DeKalb institute implicit-bias training. Both have begun the process. I have also started discussion on the County Board about rethinking policing in the county.

**2. What racial inequities do you see in your district?**

Attitudes of some law enforcement officers seem to be dependent on race. I’ve heard accounts of police who treat White citizens in friendly, helpful ways, but become cold (albeit still professional in most cases) when dealing with Black citizens. There are still segments of the community who treat Blacks with suspicion.

**3. What policies and actions will your office develop to address each of the following racial justice issues:**

**Housing Inequalities**

We need to enact a tenants’ “Bill of Rights.” Equal opportunity housing and lending laws need to be enforced.

**Environmental Justice**

Obviously zoning regulations need to treat all regions fairly, and need to be enforced. The IEPA needs to be empowered (financially and legally) to enforce regulations and to arrange for cleanup of environmentally blighted areas.

**Criminal Justice**

I think many of the suggestions I’ve heard from local BLM leaders and protestors should be enacted. Better screening of law enforcement new hires, more extensive training in de-escalation techniques, reallocating funds to social workers and others specifically trained to deal with domestic disputes, no tolerance for officers who abuse their badges. More citizen oversight of law enforcement agencies should help change the attitude from “war on crime” or “us vs. them” back to “protect and serve.”

**Healthcare Equity**

We must have universal access to affordable health care. Health care is a right, not a privilege.

**Educational Inequities**

Schools are funded by local property taxes, which leads to our high tax rates and, more importantly, to unacceptable inequities in school funding (and thus quality) based on a community’s financial status. We need to fully fund the evidence-based funding algorithm.

**Voter Suppression**

With legislative changes allowing for a lengthy early-voting period and mail-in balloting, I believe voting is as easy and convenient as it's ever been. I’d be willing, though, to hear suggestions on how to make it easier and fairer.

**4. What are the racial and gender demographics of your campaign team and/or your staff?**

Campaign manager, treasurer, communications director, graphics designer are all women. Other advisors are men, one of whom is Black. We have no Latinx people at this time.

**5. As an elected official, what other specific actions will you take to reduce racial inequities and promote racial justice?**

I will push for implicit-bias training for all legislators and department heads, to be followed by all state employees. I truly believe that most people do not see themselves as racist, or wish to be seen as racist, but nevertheless hold prejudiced views which affect their treatment of Blacks and People of Color. Being able to identify those views in oneself is the first step towards treating all people equally.

**Barbara Hernandez - candidate for Illinois House Representative District 83**

**1. What is your experience in supporting anti-racism?**

I have been active in supporting activists, organizations and the community to combat anti-racism. I have joined marches and held discussions where others and I can dive into deep discussions of what is happening in our community and how we can change the problem.

**2. What racial inequities do you see in your district?**

There are several racial inequities I see in the 83rd District there is a lack of representation in many elected offices, lack of minority owned business and resources for them to be successful. Lack of transparency when there are events or issues that pertain to the minority community, people usually just try to look the other way.

**3. What policies and actions will your office develop to address each of the following racial justice issues:**

**Housing Inequalities**

Currently I have been working alongside a few of my colleagues to make housing affordable and more accessible for low income families who have had to deal with racial discrimination.

**Environmental Justice**

CEJA is one of the main bills that I supported since day one to allow more investment to our environment but also provide jobs and training for our families.

**Criminal Justice**

I have supported and continue to support bills that will protect the minority community from injustices and provide them with resources that will allow them to have a better lifestyle.

**Healthcare Equity**

I continue to support bills that protect women and their children from unfair medical neglect that might cause women of color to lose their babies. Increasing medical resources and affordability is a priority as I voted for the bill that would allow to decrease the price of insulin.

**Educational Inequities**

No response

**Voter Suppression**

This past session I was able to vote to expand mail in ballots and offer other ways of voting safely due to COVID. This will open the doors to be able to increase accessibility to voting from home, curbside pick-up and other modern ways. We must continue to protect people's opportunity to vote and ensure that the elections are secure and open to everyone who chooses to participate.

**4. What are the racial and gender demographics of your campaign team and/or your staff?**

Currently, my state team includes all women and two men, this includes interns as well. My staff are from different backgrounds and ethnicities.

**5. As an elected official, what other specific actions will you take to reduce racial inequities and promote racial justice?**

For over a year now my office and I have had social justice committees with the public where we talk about a new topic every month, we have talked about police brutality, resources for minority owned businesses, mental health in the minority community, and other important topics. I want to continue with the conversations and provide awareness to the community of resources that are designed to help the minority community but are at times not used.

**Rick Laib - candidate for US House of Representative District 11 - Republican**

**1. What is your experience in supporting anti-racism?**

Advancing a Biblical worldview in our culture.

**2. What racial inequities do you see in your district?**

None that cannot be ultimately resolved by defense of religious liberty.

**3. What policies and actions will your office develop to address each of the following racial justice issues:**

**Housing Inequalities**

Advance and work for a free market and remove government involvement in the housing industry.

**Environmental Justice**

Work to reduce taxes so that private organizations that have developed technologies that can best care for the planet, will be in an even better position to do so.

**Criminal Justice**

Work to defend religious liberty.

**Healthcare Equity**

Work to remove the government from the healthcare industry and let individuals work with health care providers and insurance companies directly to develop best health care options.

**Educational Inequities**

Remove the government from the education business and encourage students to work with private lending organizations to secure their own loans.

**Voter Suppression**

Remove federal involvement to elections and let the states administer their own elections as promised in the Constitution.

**4. What are the racial and gender demographics of your campaign team and/or your staff?**

No response

**5. As an elected official, what other specific actions will you take to reduce racial inequities and promote racial justice?**

No response