

If I Were Mayor...

If you were mayor of your town, what would you do?

Mayors have the important job of leading the city and representing the people. From voting in council meetings to addressing the needs of their town, they ensure that every city runs smoothly. They have the crucial task of collaborating with the city government on how to best assist the community. If I were the mayor of my town, Albany, I would elect and appoint citizens to commissions to better reflect the people we serve, improve equal education, and help minority entrepreneurs pursue a successful future.

First of all, I would work to bridge the gap between males and females in the city government. Half of Albany's population is female, but only 40% of the commission members are women. This does not represent Albany's people. As mayor, I would appoint more qualified female members to commissions until it better reflects the people of Albany since women and men have different views based on their experiences.

Second, I would appoint more minorities to commissions to reflect the diversity of Albany. This is important because minorities and people of color have challenges that may not be addressed unless they have representation. Having more minorities in city government will create more voices to act towards solving these problems that impact so many members of our town.

Third, I would pursue higher, equal education for minorities of Albany. 11.4% of Albany's citizens speak a language other than English at home, yet there is only one middle school and one high school in our town with an English learning program. This makes it more difficult for students to learn English when their family has to find transportation for them across the entire town daily. As mayor, I would make sure that every school from junior high up has free transportation to schools with English programs. This is important because students who are not fluent in the language used to educate them will struggle more in school. In addition, many college students end up with debt following them for a large amount of their lives after graduation. As mayor, I would establish high school programs about career paths and the costs associated with college, and alternatively, trade schools. Trade schools are especially important because they can create high paying jobs without requiring a full four-year college education. This will give more opportunities to minorities who may not be

able to afford expensive colleges, and help to better prepare students for life after graduation.

Fourth, I would work to create more entrepreneurial opportunities for minorities. Out of over 3,000 business firms in Albany, 10% of them are minority-owned (as of 2012). This does not match the 15% of Albany's population that are minorities. To have the percentage of minority businesses match the number of minorities in the population, I want to form initiatives to create 150 new minority businesses. In order to have more minority businesses, I need an accessible way to teach minorities about entrepreneurship. I would create classes at Linn-Benton Community College for small businesses and entrepreneurs. This class can help the nearly 300 minority-run businesses in Albany grow to a larger number that represents the 15% of Albany's population that are minorities.

In conclusion, if I were mayor of Albany, I would prioritize diversity, education and entrepreneurship. People feel most represented when they look to their leaders and see someone like themselves. As a minority woman, I see groups of government officials and very few minorities and women are present. As part of the new generation, I believe that a greater understanding of each other can lead to better solutions for us all. My actions as mayor will set a path towards greater diversity, education and entrepreneurship, with the hopes to improve the lives and futures of Albany residents.

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