

District 5 Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATES FROM EACH OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S 13 DISTRICTS WERE ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE TOPICS OF DEMOCRACY, HOUSING, CLIMATE, SAFETY, AND TRANSPORTATION.

All candidates with more than \$1,000 fundraised as of June 1st were invited to respond to the following questionnaire. Candidate responses to each question will be listed alphabetically.

The following candidates did not respond:
Renier Diaz de la Portilla



Having a local government that is responsive to residents and gives everyone an equal voice is crucial for **democracy. What specific policy changes would you pursue to expand civic participation and reduce the influence of special interests?**

EILEEN HIGGINS

Virtual meetings during COVID-19 have allowed participation from home rather than by taking an entire day off from work. We need to continue this. I will continue to push the Supervisor of Elections to make voting, by mail or in person, as easy as possible, with the goal of it being universal. In District 5, residents still don't have a polling place in Brickell. In East Little Havana, where car ownership is low, there is no early voting site nearby. When turnout is low, special interests influence is greater.

MIGUEL SOLIMAN

I would create town hall meetings in my district once a month giving the residents a chance of voice their complaints and concerns. I would bring the County Directors to address the complaints, setting goals towards our next meeting to resolve these issues. In addition, I will reopen the Miami Beach and Little Havana residents assistance offices that our current Commissioner has closed.



An analysis by Apartment List shows 62.7% of renters in Miami are cost-burdened, the highest percentage of the nation's 100 largest metro areas. Why do you think this is and what are the most important steps you'll take to address this problem?

EILEEN HIGGINS

Affordable housing is my number one priority. That's why I passed legislation that puts affordable developments to the front of the permitting line. I created a plan to build an affordable complex on a 30 acre site of county land and another 20+ acre site. One building just opened and two more are under construction. We are modernizing older housing units & building more than 2000 affordable and workforce housing units. I have a concrete plan to renovate and build more than 3,600 units by 2024.

MIGUEL SOLIMAN

I will aggressively pursue companies that are relocating their Corporate Headquarters bringing the high paying jobs that we need in Miami. I will encourage local developers to build housing adjacent to the headquarters, offering them incentives in exchange for their WRITTEN commitment to provide true work force housing with affordable rates. Creating a tax base & alleviating our traffic.



Climate change is a massive challenge to Miami and is particularly harmful to under-resourced communities. What are your plans to make us more resilient and sustainable? How will you ensure all communities have access to resources to adapt and thrive?

EILEEN HIGGINS

The County needs to lead by example to reduce our emissions & make investments that will help us adapt to sea level rise. We have a roadmap with Resilient 305 & SE Florida Climate Compact plan recommendations. I will work to steer funding to implement recommendations like improved sea wall standards, freeboard changes that build structures higher, living shorelines, and more mangroves at the water's edge to recreate natural defenses.

MIGUEL SOLIMAN

Our seawalls are being raised in height but, they are NOT water proof. We are spending hundreds of millions of dollars for nothing. I will, stop all sea wall construction & redesign to make them water proof. Require all coastal new building construction to have a Mat Foundation system. This will seal the porous coral rock reducing the amount of water that our pumps have to remove reducing flooding.



The County spends over \$1 billion dollars of the budget on **police and corrections. How do you weigh this against making investments in communities to tackle issues such as homelessness, education, and public health?**

EILEEN HIGGINS

We will always need to fund the police to keep our neighborhoods safe, but we still need to implement reforms such as cashless bail and expanded civil citations. Much more needs to be done to improve the delivery of social services. I voted to fund the ICP because citizens deserve a forum to voice concerns with the police.

MIGUEL SOLIMAN

We must uphold the rule of law and order in our communities, our First Responders are an essential part of the security of our families. Instead I would look at organizations like the homeless trust that receives \$68,000,000 every year (\$100,000.00 per homeless person, we can buy them a house and car with that kind of money). Time to cut the fat & bureaucracy in our county.



Given the lack of reliable and easily accessible public transportation, what are your plans to expand public transportation options for constituents?

EILEEN HIGGINS

Our transit system needs to improve, and I led the effort to do so including helping to secure federal funding for the South Dade BRT plan and supported the first funding for the NE corridor. I advocated for the Better Bus Project, an overdue redesign of our bus routes that will improve speed and reliability of service. I will continue to fight for MetroMover expansion. We must invest in systems to get residents moving, not stuck in their cars or on transit.

MIGUEL SOLIMAN

The Miami River and vast waterways is a tremendous resource not being used. I would create a water ferry system from MIA down river to Downtown, N. Miami Beach, North Biscayne and south to Old Cutler. Prioritize a smart traffic light system to avoid 3 minutes waiting at a traffic light. Pursue technology based idea through out the world to reduce traffic and enhance public transportation.

