

DENISE TURROS



Why are you running for office, and how does your experience prepare you to be effective as a public servant in this position?

I'm running for office because I believe Miami is at a turning point and we need bold, competent leadership to steer it in the right direction. Our city is facing serious challenges, from rising housing costs and broken basic services to unchecked development and a lack of transparency in government. As someone who has lived, worked, and raised a family in this community for over 20 years, I'm not running for a title. I'm running to restore trust, fix what's broken, and fight for the neighborhoods that have been left behind. What sets me apart is that I've already been doing the work. Long before launching this campaign, I was leading efforts to bring accountability and reform to city government. I played a key role in establishing the Office of the Inspector General in Miami—a critical tool for oversight and transparency. I also led a year-long investigation into abuses within the guardianship system, which ultimately helped force out a corrupt City Attorney who had enabled misconduct for far too long. These were not easy battles, but they were necessary and I didn't wait for a political position to take them on.

In addition to advocating for reform, I've also worked on the ground to bring innovative solutions to some of our city's toughest problems. Most recently, I partnered with nonprofits to help secure funding from the City of Miami for a groundbreaking project that combines affordable housing with co-op commercial spaces, which is a first for our city. This project is about more than development; it's about long-term community ownership and economic stability for working families and small businesses. I'm proud to have helped bring that vision to life, and I'm already working to make it part of long-term city and county policy.

My professional experience as a small business owner has also shaped how I approach problem-solving.

I know what it means to meet a payroll, build a team, and navigate City of Miami and County bureaucracy—not just for myself, but for my clients and partners. I’ve worked closely with community organizations, entrepreneurs, and residents to advocate for policies that support small businesses, promote clean and safe streets, and preserve the character of our historic neighborhoods.

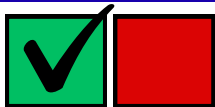
I understand that holding public office is not about power. It’s about service. It’s about being accessible, listening carefully, and doing the hard, often thankless work of making government function for the people it represents. I’m running because I believe in that kind of public service, and I know I can deliver it.

Why do you believe you are a strong candidate who will be able to win this election and earn the endorsement of Engage Miami?

I don’t see this campaign as a stepping stone. This is personal. I want my children, and all our families, to grow up in a Miami where opportunity is real, neighborhoods are respected, and City Hall actually works for us. I’m ready to get to work on day one, and I’m bringing the experience, commitment, and courage it takes to get results.

No other candidate is as ready as I am to tackle the challenges facing our city. I’ve already delivered real results without even holding elected office. From helping establish the Office of the Inspector General, to leading the effort that removed a corrupt City Attorney after a year-long investigation into the Miami-Dade guardianship system, to successfully pushing for major revisions to our Unsafe Structures Code, I’ve proven I know how to get things done. Now imagine what I can do with a full team and the resources of a City Commission office behind me. I’m not running on empty promises—I’m running with real, actionable ideas that will make an immediate difference, especially for our most vulnerable communities.

Do you support requiring developers to include affordable housing in new developments or contribute to a citywide affordable housing fund?



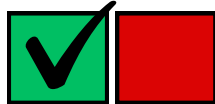
On a scale of 1-5, how committed are you to this priority?



Please explain your position, and if in support, what steps specifically would you take to make proactive changes towards this priority, and if not, why?

I've already been working with nonprofits in this space, and most recently helped secure major funding from the City of Miami for a groundbreaking project—the first of its kind—that combines affordable housing with co-op commercial spaces. If we truly want to preserve our neighborhoods, we have to make sure small businesses have a pathway to ownership. That's how we ensure long-term success for our communities. This isn't just a pilot—I'm actively working to make this a model for future policy at both the City and County level.

Do you support investing in green infrastructure and flood protection for neighborhoods most impacted by climate change?



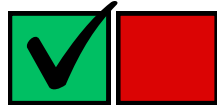
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I actually touched on this recently in one of my videos, because it's an issue I care deeply about. Right now, I'm most focused on two key priorities: flood mitigation and expanding our tree canopy to help cool our neighborhoods and combat rising temperatures. For the past seven years, I've served on the City of Miami's Historic and Environmental Preservation Board, where I've seen firsthand how policy decisions impact our environment and quality of life. It's clear that we need urgent action, not just talk when it comes to protecting and enhancing our green infrastructure. We must revise our City codes to require more green space and greater setbacks for new developments especially in Historic Neighborhoods and NCDs. This isn't just about aesthetics; it's about resilience, health, and long-term sustainability. We should also mandate the planting of mature trees, not just saplings so that their benefits are felt immediately. Equally important, we must strengthen our tree protection codes to ensure the City of Miami takes full responsibility for the care and maintenance of specimen trees located on public rights-of-way. These are shared resources, and the City must be held accountable for preserving them, not removing them for convenience or private interest. Environmental protection cannot be an afterthought. It must be baked into the way we plan, build, and grow. That's the kind of policy I'm ready to lead on.

If elected, would you defend, support, and protect immigrants in the City of Miami, regardless of status?



On a scale of 1-5, how committed are you to this priority?



Please explain your position, and if in support, what steps specifically would you take to make proactive changes towards this priority, and if not, why?

I work with immigrants in my community every day and see firsthand how much they contribute. I've helped countless individuals and families who came here legally and are working hard to build better lives. These are people who deserve our support and respect. That said, I believe we must draw a clear line when it comes to public safety. Immigrants who are here illegally and have committed crimes should not be prioritized for assistance. We need to focus our resources on those who are here in good faith, who want to work, contribute, and become part of our community. I believe in compassion, but I also believe in accountability. Our immigration policies should reflect both. We should support those who are trying to make an honest life here—not those who abuse the system with no intention of following the rules or positively contributing to our society.

If elected, would you commit to take action to ensure the LGBTQ+ community is safe and actively supported?



On a scale of 1-5, how committed are you to this priority?



Please explain your position, and if in support, what steps specifically would you take to make proactive changes towards this priority, and if not, why?

Every person, regardless of their sexual orientation, race, religion, or background deserves to feel safe, respected, and valued in the City of Miami. That is not up for debate. As a public servant, my duty is to serve everyone in this community with fairness and dignity.

Whether you've lived here your whole life or just arrived, you should have the same right to walk your streets safely, access public services, and be treated equally under the law. That's why public safety will always be my top priority, not just for some, but for everyone. No matter who you are or where you come from, you deserve a government that protects you and creates the conditions for you to thrive.

We can't build a stronger Miami unless everyone feels safe. That's the kind of leadership I believe in and the kind of leadership I'm committed to bringing to City Hall.

Do you support expanding city- funded youth jobs programs and funding local small business support in historically underserved communities?

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On a scale of 1-5, how committed are you to this priority?

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Please explain your position, and if in support, what steps specifically would you take to make proactive changes towards this priority, and if not, why?

I'm already doing this work on the ground through my nonprofit partnerships in Allapattah and Little Havana, so of course I would continue advocating for more resources and support to expand these efforts. But I also believe this responsibility doesn't fall solely on the government. Real, lasting change requires collaboration between the public sector, nonprofits, community leaders, and everyday residents. We all have a role to play, and when we work together, we can make a much greater impact.

Would you support allocating city funds toward programs that directly serve residents living below the poverty line such as rental assistance, food access, or guaranteed income pilots?

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Please explain your position, and if in support, what steps specifically would you take to make proactive changes towards this priority, and if not, why?

I support the priority in question, but I believe we have to be honest about what's really standing in the way of progress. The problem is not always a lack of programs or funding. We already have many of these resources in place. The real issue has consistently been mismanagement, misappropriation of funds, and a lack of accountability at the City level. If elected, my first step would be to conduct a comprehensive audit of existing programs and budgets related to this issue. We need to understand exactly where the breakdowns are happening—what's working, what's not, and where the money is going. Transparency has to be the foundation. Next, I would push for stronger oversight mechanisms, including performance metrics for any department or partner organization receiving City funds. This includes quarterly public reporting and increased coordination with the Office of the Inspector General to ensure proper checks and balances.

I would also prioritize community input and on-the-ground feedback. Too often, decisions are made in silos without listening to the people most affected. I want to build partnerships with local nonprofits, neighborhood leaders, and subject-matter experts to co-design improvements and make sure funding is actually addressing real needs, not just being spent to check boxes. Lastly, I would advocate for a shift in how we define success. Throwing money at a problem is not a solution. Success should be measured in impact, whether that's fewer families in crisis, more clean and safe streets, or improved outcomes for small businesses. And when programs fall short, we need to be willing to re-evaluate and adapt. In short, I fully support this priority but I believe we must fix the way we manage and implement it. Without restoring public trust and enforcing real accountability, even the best-funded efforts will continue to fall short.

Many parks are locked on weekends or have bathrooms or facilities that are locked. Would you ensure these public spaces are accessible, well-funded, and available to neighbors on weekends?



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Please explain your position, and if in support, what steps specifically would you take to make proactive changes towards this priority, and if not, why?

Yes, I absolutely believe our parks should be accessible, open, and fully functional especially on weekends, when most families and working residents have time to enjoy them. While many of our parks are generally well maintained, there's still significant room for improvement. It makes no sense that we invest so much in our park aesthetics, only to leave bathrooms locked or close entire facilities on the days when the community needs them most. If elected, I will push for a review of current park operations and budgeting to ensure we're not only maintaining our green spaces, but also staffing them properly and keeping them open during evenings and weekends. Parks are public resources, they should serve the public every day of the week.

Do you support creating a digital budget interactive tool at the municipal level to increase transparency and make it easier for residents to understand and engage with how public dollars are spent?



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Yes, I support creating a digital, interactive budget tool to increase transparency and help residents better understand how public dollars are being spent. Transparency is essential to restoring public trust, and people deserve to know where their money is going in a format that's easy to access and understand. That said, I also recognize that our current City website is outdated, full of broken links, and includes programs that were never implemented and information that hasn't been updated in decades some as far back as the 1990s, like our Historic Guidelines. Before we can build new tools, we need to fix the foundation. I believe in setting realistic goals. That's why I plan to propose a phased five-year digital modernization plan, starting with a full audit of existing digital infrastructure, followed by updates to core content and systems, and ultimately the rollout of new public-facing tools like an interactive budget dashboard. Access to accurate, real-time information shouldn't be a luxury it should be the standard.

I'm committed to making that happen.

There is currently a coalition called Stronger Miami working to change the city charter to move elections to even years, expand the number of districts from 5 to 9, and require fair redistricting criteria. Do you support this initiative?



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I've been working with Mel Meinhardt for many years and supported the idea of expanding representation even before the coalition was formally established. In fact, I had been advocating for district expansion long before I connected with Mel and his team. It simply doesn't make sense that the City of Miami home to over 400,000 residents has the same number of commissioners as a city like Key West, which has a population of just 25,000. Our city has outgrown its current structure, and it's time our government reflects that growth. Expanding the number of districts would lead to more responsive, localized representation and help ensure that every neighborhood has a real voice at City Hall.