



Questions for Candidates for City Council from the Conservative Coalition of Harris County

This questionnaire will be posted onto the Conservative Coalition of Harris County website for public viewing (www.cchc-pac.org).

Candidate Name	Position that Candidate is Running For
Gaylon S. Caldwell	Mayor of Houston

Candidates please give your answer to each of the following questions and include your rationale with each answer. Please be concise and clear.

1. Why are you running for City Council? If elected, what will be your priorities?

Answer: I want to run for Mayor because I am confident, I have solid solutions that will solve the issues that we face in the City of Houston today and create a better city worth living in tomorrow.

Priority 1 – Save Black Male Youth

Black Male Youth are born at an extreme disadvantaged in today’s America. They are more likely to be born into a single parent household, to live in poverty, to be arrested, to be expelled from school, and the list continues. As Mayor of the City of Houston, I will work to close the gaps in a system designed to fail young Black boys. Young Black boys deserve the opportunity to be productive members within their communities. More importantly, we must ensure our young Black boys are becoming the best Black men they can grow up to be for the sake of their future Black families and Black wives.

Priority 2 – Marijuana Friendly Policing

As Mayor of the City of Houston, I promise to continue efforts to end the failed War on Drugs first by enacting marijuana-friendly policing. For America to remain united on its approach to liberty and justice for all and equal justice under the law, it must be determined that every aspect of marijuana decriminalization policy and the pursuit of legalization must see through a lens clearly visioning equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Despite legislative efforts towards equitable marijuana decriminalization among states, law enforcement agencies continue to exercise their discretion on making arrests for marijuana violations. No longer can marijuana reform efforts be discussed without mentioning the need for meaningful policies created to provide the best direction possible to benefit the communities affected the most by the failed War on Drugs. The best policy directive for ensuring an equitable approach toward the implementation of marijuana decriminalization legislation is Decline-to-Prosecute and the elimination of probable cause given to law enforcement based on the odor or presence of marijuana. To ensure equity considering marijuana usage and efforts toward decriminalization, as Mayor of the City of Houston, I support this initiative and will advocate for it. Law enforcement resources and taxpayer dollars wasted on the prosecution of marijuana offenses can be better spent on serious and violent crimes.

Priority 3 – Gun Control through Firearm Safety, Education, and Awareness

As Mayor of the City of Houston, I promise to devote more resources to ending youth gun violence, first by creating and supporting a City-Wide Youth and Families Gun Safety Awareness Program. Lack of knowledge on firearm safety and proper usage exacerbates the gun violence seen in our city, especially among our youth. The first teacher of proper firearm handling and use among the city’s youth has become video games, music videos, and movies. As mayor, I will create a family-structured program with the assistance of firearm retailers who employ highly trained and skilled instructors with many years of experience and of the Houston Police Department, to provide firearm safety awareness training to our youth and to their families. This program will be implemented only in areas of the city that are plagued by high levels of gun violence.

Our youth and their families must understand the danger of firearms, how to safely store firearms, how to safely operate firearms, how to remain safe in the presence of firearms, when to use or not to use firearms, and when you can or cannot legally possess a firearm. A need for this program has become more crucial after recent state legislation removed firearm training as a requirement to legally be in possession of a firearm. This initiative will lead to a decrease in shootings both intentional and accidental. This initiative will also support the 2nd amendment. For now, let us focus less on removing firearms through gun buybacks and more time on providing firearm safety and training courses for our youth and

their families. Until we have more common-sense gun laws in this country this becomes the only alternative.

Priority 4 – Safety Parks Initiative

As Mayor of the City of Houston, I promise to ensure the safety and well-being of Houstonians while they enjoy the city’s parks. Our parks are the center and heart of our communities. Parks are a necessity for maintaining the quality of living and well-being of Houstonians. From community outreach and engagement to disaster response and recovery efforts, all essential services provided to our citizens should be established directly through Houston’s many parks for maximum influence.

It does no good to continue to make investments in our parks if we can’t first guarantee the safety of those who visit them. Our parks should be a sanctuary for youth in need of a place to mature and grow, and not be influenced by wrongdoing. The only way to succeed in these efforts is to ensure our parks are clear of drugs and other potential violent crimes such as robberies and sexual assaults. Every Park located within the city should be equipped with continuous monitoring technology, dedicated park officers, and proper upkeep and maintenance. Within the Houston Police Department, a division will be created with a sole focus on crime prevention at city parks. While we work to secure our parks, we will continue efforts to provide upgrades to our parks with the assistance of the whole community.

Priority 5 - Expand the staffing and capabilities of the City of Houston Office of Emergency Management

As Mayor of the City of Houston, I promise to expand the staffing and capabilities of the City of Houston’s Office of Emergency Management. Greater Houston has experienced seven federally declared disasters since 2015, and the State of Texas is leading the nation in federally declared disasters. Houston is exposed to many hazards that have the potential to cause disruption to the operations of the city, causing catastrophic damages and loss of life.

Knowing that all disasters start and end locally. It is a must that we invest in our ability to prepare our city employees, responders, communities, and our businesses for future impacts caused by these disasters. First, we must accomplish this by having a robust emergency management program by expanding staffing, incorporating new strategies and technologies, and being proactive rather than reactive.

Priority 6 – Houston Fire & Houston EMS

As Mayor of the City of Houston, I promise to continue efforts to ensure the Houston Fire Department maintains its status as having the best firefighters in the nation. EMS-designated emergency calls are by far the leading specific type of fire department response. But the needs of EMS inevitably become secondary under the umbrella of the fire department. I will explore opportunities to distinguish the skillsets of EMS while keeping the structure of HFD intact or establishing Houston EMS as a standalone entity. For example, I will eliminate the need for cross-training paramedics as firefighters. As Mayor of the City of Houston, I will also invest in the infrastructure of HFD. This includes HFD’s fleet, firefighting equipment, and fire stations.

Priority 7 – Holding Businesses, Apartment Complexes, and HOAs accountable for Public Safety

As Mayor of the City of Houston, I promise to pursue efforts to ensure the safety of the public by enacting policies that place more responsibility on businesses, apartment complexes, and HOAs. When a Houstonian decides to shop at a local business, then that business has a duty to implement measures to ensure the safety of its customers. When an apartment complex provides housing to a tenant, then it has a duty to implement measures to ensure the safety of its tenants. When an HOA accepts annual fees from those who live

within its community, then it has a duty to join efforts to ensure the safety of families. Nuisance locations as identified by the city must also be fully held accountable, especially those who seek to make a profit from the presence of criminal activity. All businesses and apartment complexes within Houston should be required to submit crime prevention and safety plans for permitting. In addition, all businesses and apartment complexes should be subject to crime prevention and safety inspections by inspectors within the Houston Police Department. Nuisance locations should be required to hire HPD officers during their hours of operation. The city's efforts to reduce crime at businesses, apartment complexes, and in our neighborhoods must be expanded. Loitering at convenience stores and gas stations must come to an end because it creates a safe haven for lost time.

Priority 8 – Downtown Expansion

As Mayor of the City of Houston, I promise to invest greatly in the rebirth of Downtown Houston. Downtown Houston is the heart of the city, and it is the key to a prosperous future. Downtown is a key indicator of the social and economic position of a city. Therefore, I will put every effort forward to ensuring Downtown Houston earns the title of one of the best downtowns in this country which will benefit families and businesses alike. For example, every Sunday will be Family Day in the City of Houston which will consist of music, food, and fun for all families. I visualize food trucks lining the streets of downtown, concerts at City Hall, and lots of entertainment. I visualize booming restaurants and shops along with vibrant scenery.

Priority 9 – Littering / Dumping

As Mayor of the City of Houston, I promise to devote significant city resources to combatting and preventing littering and illegal dumping. I support the highest penalties for those who decide to commit these crimes. The value of the city is greatly diminished, and public health is compromised because of littering and illegal dumping. I will also expand the number of neighborhood depository/recycling centers. I will allow businesses to serve as solid waste collection sites through an incentive program offered by the city.

Priority 10 – Vacant Businesses / Homes

As Mayor of the City of Houston, I promise to crack down on vacant businesses and homes. Vacant businesses and homes are contributors to the increase in crime, increase in food deserts, and decline in property values. For our communities to continue to thrive, we must address the issue of vacant businesses and homes.

Priority 11 – Annex

As Mayor of the City of Houston, I will seek to expand emergency services for northeast Houston by pursuing measures to annex Atascocita and areas of northeastern Harris County covered by Harris County ESD #25.

Priority 12 – Stop Harming our Children, Elderly, and Police Officers

As Mayor of the City of Houston, I promise to take every possible step to prevent the harm of our children, the Older and Aging, of our law enforcement officers. I will ensure that all resources are exhausted to bring those to justice who bring harm to children or to our law enforcement officers.

2. What experience or skills have prepared you to serve as a city council member? What differentiates you from the other candidates and/or council members?

Answer: Gaylon Caldwell is a 33-year-old Black male and 10-year resident of Houston, Texas where he resides in Scenic Woods in Northeast Houston. Mr. Caldwell is a 2018 graduate of Texas Southern University with a degree in Emergency Management/ Homeland Security and a current University of Houston graduate student where he is pursuing a Master of Public Administration/ Public Policy degree. Mr. Caldwell has many years in the fire service as a volunteer firefighter/EMT, former 911 telecommunicator with the City of Houston, and many years of Emergency Management experience at all levels of government. Mr. Caldwell seeks to reinforce public safety in Houston; continue the fight for equity, diversity, and inclusion; and to give all Houstonians the best quality of living for a better tomorrow via his Priorities Plan. Make sure you read Mr. Caldwell’s priorities for Houston to make the most informed decision, which is to vote Gaylon Caldwell for the next Mayor of the City of Houston.

3. What is the effectiveness of the current system for City of Houston residents to report issues/file complaints? How can this system be improved to better serve residents?

Answer: The City of Houston has worked to maintain a sufficient 311 system that Houston residents are able to access and report issues/ file complaints. As Mayor of Houston, I am open to allowing Department Directors to attend more public forums to ensure residents’ questions or concerns are being addressed at the department level. As Mayor of Houston, I am also open to pursuing new methods to ensure Council Members are situationally aware of citizens’ complaints or concerns within their respective districts. As Mayor of Houston, I am committed to whole community involvement, which means that I am pursuing measures to not only allow residents to report issues/ file complaints, but also to inform and encourage them to become more involved in the implementation of solutions to their problems.

4. How would you characterize the funding of the following items; Please rank selections, check funding boxes below and provide a short explanation of your reasoning in answer section box:

	Over-Funded / Adequate / Under-Funded		
___ Solid Waste Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
___ Parks and Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
___ Houston Police Department	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
___ Houston Fire Department	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
___ Houston Health Department	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
___ Municipal Courts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
___ Libraries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
___ Public Works	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
___ Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
___ Conventions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Answer:

5. Crime problem in Houston--can the police force be increased? Immigration impact--should Houston be a sanctuary city?
- Answer:** The Houston Police Department has continued to struggle with the hiring and retainment of police officers. Over the past years, it has been said that HPD is short of at least 2,000 police officers. Overtime cannot always be the sole solution for filling staffing shortages within this department. HPD should seek to hire more non-commissioned public safety officers to help reduce the workload. Non-commissioned officers can be tasked with responding to non-violent lower priority calls. These calls generally only require a written report, the submittal of evidence, or documented information. This alternative would reduce the workload on the system, relieving commissioned officers of lower-level calls, while providing more officers the opportunity to respond to higher priority calls or patrol for acts of violence. In addition, nuisance locations or areas of interest should be required to hire Houston Police Department officers as on-site security during its hours of operations.
6. Do you support amending the City Charter to allow council members to add items to the meeting agendas?
- Answer:**
As Mayor of Houston, I support amending the City Charter to allow council members to add items to meeting agendas.
7. Do you support the proposed Hospital Bond issue for \$2.5 billion dollars?
- Answer:** As Mayor of Houston, I fully support the proposed Hospital Bond issue for \$2.5 B.

BY RETURNING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, THE CANDIDATE ASSUMES FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL ANSWERS TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. THE ANSWERS ON THE FOREGOING REFLECT THE CANDIDATE'S BEST EFFORTS TO ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE HONESTLY AND DIRECTLY.

Once this questionnaire has been completed, please email it to: alex@cchc-pac.org.

Please note: You ***must*** return your questionnaire from the email address to which it was sent. Questionnaires returned from any other email address will be considered fraudulent and will ***not*** be recorded and no answers will be published in the voter's guide. CCHC deems a return from the proper email address as authentication of the correct respondent.