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## **United Way IL Candidate Survey: 71<sup>st</sup> District Challenger Joan Padilla (D-Sterling)**

United Way recently asked legislative candidates in Iowa and Illinois to complete a candidate survey so that we could share their stands on issues related to our priorities: education, income, health and equity.

While United Way does not participate in partisan or political activity, we are pleased to offer this information so that voters can assess each candidate's alignment with issues important to United Way as they prepare to cast their ballots.

All answers below are posted in their entirety, as submitted by the candidate. To see the full list of responses to candidate surveys ahead of the 2020 General Election, visit [www.unitedwayqc.org/candidate-surveys](http://www.unitedwayqc.org/candidate-surveys).

### **1. What specific actions can the State of Illinois take to address the disparities in school achievement and graduation rates between African American students and their white peers?**

the disparities in school achievement and graduation rates between African American students and their white peers by acknowledging and focusing on the causes of these disparities: education resources, affordable housing, adequate nutrition, investing in parks and recreation, healthcare, daycare, etc. Once you deal with the socio-economic imbalances, these students will be better prepared for success.

### **2. Would you support changes to the school-aid formula to provide additional support to districts with high rates of poverty, minority populations and English language learners to help stem the decline in academic success among these populations?**

Yes

### **3. What role could the State of Illinois play in ensuring all K-12 students have access to broadband and technology to enable virtual learning?**

Considering we are in the midst of a global pandemic, the inconsistencies of access to the internet has been brought to the forefront. Establishing statewide broadband, internet access,

hot spots, and the technology to connect teachers and students should be a major focus of investment in the State of Illinois. This is a major infrastructure endeavor but one the State can incorporate into the Rebuild Illinois plan.

**4. A network of quality, affordable childcare services – including wrap-around care for school-age children – is critical to parents remaining in the workforce and businesses retaining staff. Do you support additional state investment in childcare services and, if so, what ideas do you have for strengthening the childcare system in Illinois during the COVID crisis and post COVID?**

Affordable childcare is so important for our working families. I believe investing in our families is not only a good thing but a responsibility. If we want our communities to be strong then our families need to have the opportunity to place their child in a safe, well- resourced, affordable, and vibrant daycare setting. I would look to working with public and private entities to expand daycare opportunities. employers, institutions of learning can play a vital role to address this challenge.

**5. Rock Island County has a high rate of poverty which dramatically impacts the health and stability of families and the community. What could the State of Illinois do to provide more opportunities for residents to achieve economic independence and meet basic needs?**

Addressing the root causes of poverty is the first step in reducing poverty! [Unemployment, education, transportation, healthcare] The State should and can work with public and private entities, small business development centers, and the community colleges to offer training, retraining. programs, certification programs as well as employment/ job fairs.

**6. Describe what you'd like to see the State of Illinois do – perhaps in partnership with city and county governments – to address systemic racism.**

We are one community. When one suffers, we all suffer. When one of us is met with injustice or been the victim of racism we are weaker. I believe systemic racism does in fact limit equal opportunity. The time is here to make the change necessary to improve the quality of life for all of us but especially our members of color. Our communities need to stand up and acknowledge systemic racism is present in order to abolish it. Ridding systemic racism and injustice starts by reversing those policies and laws that perpetuate oppression and fuel discrimination in all sectors of life, from public safety, education, hiring practices, housing, and healthcare. Police brutality and racism is at the forefront of conversations and a good place to start in making a real difference. There is more than one avenue to take, but we as decent human beings must be willing to bring the discussion to the table, working together. Regarding racism and law enforcement, we need to look at the root causes within departments. Are better recruiting and

education policies necessary? Are licensing and continuing education with a focus on social sciences the answer? What is apparent is that we need to be better.

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#### About United Way of the Quad Cities

United Way is a community-based social change organization that puts opportunity in the hands of all Quad Citizens. Working with our determined partners, volunteers, advocates and donors, we lead the charge to improve education, income and health – the building blocks of opportunity. The result is a mobilized community where every Quad Citizen is living their best possible life. [unitedwayqc.org](http://unitedwayqc.org)