





**BIPOC TO THE BALLOT BOX** is a non-partisan public education campaign launched by the ACLU of Massachusetts and partners to build voter awareness and engagement in municipalities with large or growing Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Our goal is to provide Springfield voters access to the information they need to make an informed decision at the polls this November 7th.

All 2023 Mayoral candidates in Springfield were asked the same questions and given equal opportunity to respond. Those who did not respond are marked as “no response.” For candidates' full answers, visit [aclum.org/en/bipoc-ballot-box](https://aclum.org/en/bipoc-ballot-box)

If elected, would you support:	 <b>Justin Hurst</b>	 <b>Dominic Sarno</b>
guaranteed hybrid access for members of the public to Springfield meetings that are subject to the state Open Meeting Law?	Yes	No response
community-based, non-armed alternatives to police responders for mental health and non-violent calls?	Yes	No response
increasing city funding to support substance use disorder treatment?	Yes	No response
passage of a statewide same-day voter registration law?	Yes	No response
strengthening the statewide Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) system to ensure more accurate and detailed reporting from the Springfield Police Department?	Yes	No response
an external audit of the school committee budget on an annual basis that is accessible to the public?	Yes	No response
ending the police department's live surveillance of children in Springfield public schools?	Yes	No response
including public comment as a permanent agenda item at every school committee meeting that is open to the public?	Yes	No response



**Justin Hurst**



**Dominic Sarno**

**What is your approach to improving public safety in Springfield?**

Get Rid of Police Chief Cheryl Clapprood and conduct a national search for her replacement. Implement the Consent Decree with fidelity. Empower the Police Commission to hold rogue officers accountable. Make sure we have a full complement of police officers who are properly trained in implicit bias, de-escalation, conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity, trauma and mental health. Have an active Peer Response Team like the Fire Department that officers trust to address trauma.

No response.

**What measures would you take to improve transparency in the school committee decision-making, meetings, and processes?**

Obtain feedback from school committee members and the community on our areas of strengths and challenges. Include community on improving transparency. Make certain all schools provide information on the role of the school committee, a copy of the meetings calendar, and information on how to be kept abreast of meeting agendas. Ensure meeting reminders are sent out district wide and communicated to the public. Hold school committee meetings outside of city hall and in the community.

No response.

**How would you support the unhoused population in Springfield?**

Appoint a Building Commissioner who Lives in Springfield and recognizes the urgency for housing units. Have a competent building department to streamline permits to expedite new construction and the rehabilitation of dilapidated properties. Ensure code enforcement holds landlords accountable for poor living conditions and condemned units. Hire more attorneys to take absentee landlords to housing court immediately and pursue receivership whenever necessary.

No response.

**How would you seek to improve public transportation in Springfield?**

I have been the leader in the fight for reduced and fare free bus routes in Springfield. We have seen fare free routes in Worcester, Lawrence, and Boston increase ridership and lead to fruitful conversations about how the public transit systems can support other parts of the community. As Mayor, I get to appoint a representative to the PVTA board, and I plan for that person to be an advocate for forward looking policies.

No response.

**Voter turnout has been low in recent years and many Springfield residents feel disengaged from city government. How would you engage residents – both those who do and do not vote?**

Turnout has been low, but I am proud of how many residents turned out in the preliminary election - it was the most we've seen in several decades. It is really clear from the preliminary turnout that part of turnout is candidates who are knocking on doors, sending out mail, and running television ads. As we see from presidential election turnout however, municipal candidates have nothing on the amount of energy and attention that the presidential contests attract.

No response.

**How would you work with students, families, and educators to address safety in public schools?**

Create opportunities for school staff, students, families, community stakeholders, and public safety personnel to collectively provide feedback and share solutions. Strengthen our community and school policing practices. Review all policies with an equity lens. Embed evidence based practices that support a safe learning environment for all.

No response.

**How would you invest in programs for student mental health resources and counseling and ensure that they are transparent to the public?**

Allocate financial funding and personnel/human capital for the following: Identifying resources and interventions that center the voices it intends to serve, is culturally responsible and evidence based. Research alternative/nontraditional interventions for mental health services. Ensure mental health services are equitably distributed. Provide education to help destigmatize mental health. Create a city wide wraparound support mode.

No response.