PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

EAN THOMAS



FOR DENVER MAYOR

Public safety means everyone has clean air, clean water, safe working conditions, a home that's comfortable and affordable, and a strong safe community. We can create that world by investing in public health, addressing the root causes of harm and finding data-driven solutions that fit the problem. This includes fighting poverty and investing in community-based care and accountability, including harm reduction and addiction services, mental health care, youth mentorship and restorative justice.

<u>1 Address public health hazards</u>

- Ensure clean air, clean drinking water and safe buildings. Check out my Environmental Policy Plans for more detail on how we get this done!
- Get people housed and out of encampments with compassionate, data-driven solutions. Check out my Housing Policy Plans for more detail on how we get this done and prevent any more Denverites from losing their homes!
- Expand public restrooms and clean water fountains throughout the city.
- <u>The Denver Neighborhood Equity Index</u> shows that the same communities of color impacted by redlining have less healthcare access and worse health hazards. We need to expand Denver Health outreach in these areas.
- Work with healthcare unions and healthcare workers to ensure workplaces are safe and justly compensated.
- Ensure every patient receives culturally competent care, including but not limited to Black patients, patients
 of color and LGBT+ patients. Medical services should be available in Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic and
 Amharic.
- Ensure ongoing support during the pandemic including ensuring access to masks, tests and care for long COVID patients.
- Work with the Fire Department to protect workers, particularly from hazardous exposures like PFAS.
- Ensure that jails under purview of the Sheriff's department serve adequate food, heat and medical care.

2. BREAK & PREVENT CYCLES OF HARM

We need to go to the root cause of harm and violence in our communities, and invest in solutions that will break those cycles completely. We can do so by:

- Reducing poverty and the desperate situations it places people in. Check out my plans for housing and workers' rights for a few ways we're going to do this!
- We should decriminalize crimes of existence and survival that trap people in cycles of incarceration. This includes "crimes" like loitering, sex work, and "sit eat lie" ordinances. And investing in data driven solutions will benefit everyone, not just from a public safety perspective but an economic one. Research shows that on average nationwide it costs taxpayers \$31,065 a year to criminalize a single person experiencing homelessness, and on average only \$10,051 to provide that person supportive rapid housing. Decriminalization should be paired with expungement and warrant clearing for those convicted or charged of those crimes in the past.
- Address the harms of the war on drugs and the way disproportionately impacted communities, especially Black and brown communities, are still excluded from the cannabis industry.
- Ensure access to mental health support and culturally relevant support groups for youth and adults.
- Ensure access to consistency of care for addiction, both inpatient and outpatient. This includes safe use
 sites, harm reduction, distribution of NARCAN, fentanyl test strips and education campaigns. <u>Data shows</u>
 these compassionate approaches save lives.
- Enact many recommendations from the <u>Denver Reimaging Policing Task Force</u> including immediately creating an autonomous community-led, non-law enforcement institution to fund community interventions. This includes:
 - o Expanding STAR to completely replace police as a response to mental health crises.
 - Explore with community organizations what other functions of police could be better addressed by unarmed responders, alternative professionals or community groups.
- Invest in community support, mentorship and job training especially for youth and the formerly incarcerated.
- Create robust restorative justice practices and opportunities for communities to heal and divert people from
 incarceration. Incarceration rarely allows people to address anger issues or trauma, and often leaves people
 more scarred than when they came in. Restorative justice can break this cycle. Indigenous communities like
 the Jicarilla Apache have used restorative justice successfully for centuries.

3. FOCUS THE ROLE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

We need to use research and data to focus police where they are the most effective, while holding police accountable to the highest standards of conduct.

- We must ensure law enforcement had the bandwidth to dedicate themselves to the most serious violent crime. For example, law enforcement should be given the tools to cooperate regionally and nationally to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous women.
- To ensure that police do not perpetrate violent harm, we need to ensure COB and the Office of the Independent Monitor have the necessary power to investigate complaints and problems and deliver accountability. We need a clear, independent due process for officer conduct. The problems with policing are systemic, not individual, but we still need policies in place for individual behavior.

EXPERIENCE

As a former teacher and mentor to indigenous youth, I've seen the power in reinvesting in my community the way they invested in me growing up. This directs our youth towards hope and positive outcomes. I founded Headwaters Protectors, an organization that provides clean water and trash services to unhoused encampments and has presented plans to scale this work to the city government. I've taken direct action against the criminalization of existence and poverty and recently used my campaign platform to advocate for the Freedom to Walk & Roll bill decriminalizing jaywalking. I've consistently organized against City Council and homeless shelter contracting questionable armed security like Allied Universal and the abuse these companies enact on our people. I sat on the board to implement STAR. I'm a horticultural therapist so I understand mental health care. I also consider all my work-from touring Colorado to pass a historic legislation for clean air, to supporting the farmworkers' union-to be advocating for different aspects of public health and safety.