

## 2018 City Council District 9 Candidate Statement Transcript

>> HELLO.

I'M KATHIE TOVO, AND IT'S BEEN AN HONOR AND A PRIVILEGE TO SERVE AS MAYOR PRO TEM FOR THE CITY OF AUSTIN AND TO REPRESENT DISTRICT 9 ON THE AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL.

I FIRST RAN FOR COUNCIL BECAUSE I WANTED TO FIGHT FOR PROGRESSIVE POLICIES THAT BENEFIT ALL OF US.

I PROMISED TO BE A DIFFERENT KIND OF COUNCILMEMBER, AND I'VE KEPT THAT PROMISE EVERY DAY AT CITY HALL.

MY SERVICE ON COUNCIL HAS BEEN ABOUT REPRESENTED EVERYDAY AUSTINITES, WEIGHING ANY COUNCIL ACTION, BIG OR SMALL, AGAINST THE EFFECT IT MIGHT HAVE ON THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE, STUDY, RAISE FAMILIES, AND WORK HERE IN AUSTIN.

I STARTED AS AN ADVOCATE IN MY OWN NEIGHBORHOOD.

I GOT ENGAGED IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION WHILE I WAS TEACHING COLLEGE CLASSES IN WRITING INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES.

BUT OVER THE YEARS I GOT MORE AND MORE INVOLVED AS THE PRESIDENT OF MY LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION AND THEN BY SERVING ON A NUMBER OF CITY BOARDS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT TASK FORCES, LIKE THE CITY'S PLANNING COMMISSION AND AISD'S COMMUNITY COMMITTEE ON NEIGHBORHOODS AND SCHOOLS.

I BROUGHT TO THOSE POSITIONS THE SAME VALUES THAT I'VE BROUGHT TO CITY COUNCIL, THE VALUES OF COMMUNITY, OF FAIR PLAY, EQUITY, AND LOOKING OUT FOR OUR WORKING FAMILIES.

AS YOUR CITY COUNCIL MEMBER, I'VE WORKED WITH THE COMMUNITY, AND TOGETHER WE'VE SUCCEEDED IN BRINGING REAL TANGIBLE CHANGE TO OUR CITY.

AUSTIN STILL HAS CHALLENGES, AND THERE ARE NO EASY RESOLUTIONS TO HOMELESSNESS, TO ESCALATING HOUSING PRICES, TRAFFIC, ECONOMIC INEQUITY, AND OTHER COMPLEX PROBLEMS.

REAL PROGRESS TAKES ALL OF US WORKING TOGETHER AND BEING PERSISTENT TO KEEP OUR CITY MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

DURING MY TIME ON COUNCIL, WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE REAL PROGRESS ON THE ISSUES THAT MATTER TO OUR CITY, LIKE AFFORDABLE HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, CLIMATE CHANGE, HOMELESSNESS, CIVIL RIGHTS, WOMEN'S RIGHTS, WORKER PROTECTIONS, AND MANY OTHERS.

AND I'M PROUD OF MY RECORD.

I'M PROUD OF THE WORK I'VE DONE TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF MONEY GOING TO OUR HOUSING TRUST FUND TO CREATE AND PRESERVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING; OF LEADING ON EXPLORING IMPORTANT TENANT PROTECTIONS AND ANTI DISPLACEMENT MEASURES, SUCH AS THE RIGHT TO RETURN AND A TENANTS RIGHT TO PURCHASE ACT; OF THE SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT AND

THEN THE EXPANSION OF THE HOMELESSNESS OUTREACH STREET TEAM; AND FINALLY OPENING THE SOBERING CENTER AFTER IT HAD STALLED FOR MORE THAN A DECADE; OF PASSING AN ACTION PLAN FOR ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN THIS COMMUNITY AND THEN INCREASING THE CITY RESOURCES PUT TOWARD THAT EFFORT OF MAKING SURE EVERY ONE OF OUR NEIGHBORS HAS A SAFE AND STABLE PLACE TO CALL HOME.

I'M PROUD OF HELPING LEAD THE WAY TO SET AMBITIOUS GOALS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY AND FOR INCREASING OUR USE OF SOLAR; FOR PROTECTING OUR WORKERS BY STRENGTHENING OUR NONDISCRIMINATION POLICIES AND PASSING PAID SICK LEAVE AND FAIR CHANCE HIRING; FOR ADVANCING THE LARGEST MOBILITY BOND IN AUSTIN HISTORY, WITH NEW FUNDING FOR CORRIDORS, SIDEWALKS, URBAN TRAILS, BIKE LANES, AND MORE.

IT'S BEEN A BUSY FEW YEARS, BUT TOGETHER WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO TAKE REAL ACTION TO DELIVER REAL SOLUTIONS TO SOME OF OUR MOST PRESSING PROBLEMS.

OF COURSE WE'RE SEEING NOW THAT WE CAN'T TAKE ANY OF THESE HARD WON VICTORIES FOR GRANTED.

WHERE ONCE RESIDENTS COULD WORK THROUGH CITY GOVERNMENT TO BUILD THE COMMUNITIES THEY WANTED TO SEE, WITH DONALD TRUMP IN THE WHITE HOUSE, TED CRUZ IN THE SENATE, AND GREG ABBOTT IN THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION, WE'RE SEEING A LOT OF THE PROGRESS WE'VE MADE TURN BACK.

WE'VE SEEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ATTACKING THE RIGHTS OF RESIDENTS HERE IN AUSTIN WHILE THE STATE TRIES TO TAKE AWAY OUR LOCAL CONTROL.

AND THAT'S WHY THIS YEAR'S ELECTION IS CRITICAL.

WE NEED LOCAL LEADERS WHO WILL PROTECT OUR PROGRESS AND WILL LEAD US AHEAD.

OUR CITY IS FACING SIGNIFICANT CHANGES, AND DISTRICT 9 IS AT THE EPICENTER OF MANY OF THOSE CHANGES.

I'LL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT A CITY HALL THAT WORKS ON BEHALF OF EVERYDAY AUSTINITES.

I FIRMLY BELIEVE WE CAN WELCOME NEW COMPANIES TO OUR CITY WITHOUT PROVIDING HUGE INCENTIVES.

WE CAN EMBRACE VISITORS AND USE THE TAXES THEY GENERATE NOT JUST TO ATTRACT MORE OR AND VISITORS, BUT RATHER TO REINVEST IN OUR CITY'S PRECIOUS ASSETS LIKE BARTON SPRINGS.

WE CAN HAVE LAND USE RULES THAT ACCOMMODATE GROWTH AND CHANGE IN APPROPRIATE AREAS BUT THAT DON'T OVERRIDE OUR NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS AND LAND USE PATTERNS, AND THAT DON'T RESULT IN WIDESPREAD REDEVELOPMENT AND DISPLACEMENT OF THE RESIDENTS WHO LIVE HERE.

WE CAN FOSTER DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS.

AND WE MUST DO A BETTER JOB OF REACHING OUT TO OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED AND TO MOVE CLOSER TO A DAY WHEN AUSTIN'S PROSPERITY IS ENJOYED BY ALL WHO LIVE HERE.

I'M KATHIE TOVO.

I'VE BEEN WITH YOU, STANDING UP FOR YOUR COMMUNITY AS YOUR DISTRICT 9 COUNCILMEMBER, AND I'M EAGER TO CONTINUE WORKING TO MAKE AUSTIN, TEXAS, AN EVEN BETTER PLACE TO LIVE FOR ALL OF ITS RESIDENTS WHO LIVE HERE NOW, THOSE IN DISTRICT 9 AND THROUGHOUT THE CITY.

I'M SO HONORED TO BE SUPPORTED IN MY RE ELECTION BY THE CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL, THE WORKERS DEFENSE ACTION FUND, AFSCME, EDUCATION AUSTIN, THE LABORERS INTERNATIONAL UNION OF NORTH AMERICA, UNITE HERE, AND EVERY OTHER LABOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT ENDORSED IN THIS RACE BASED ON MY TRACK RECORD OF SUPPORTING WORKING FAMILIES IN THIS COMMUNITY.

MY ENVIRONMENTAL RECORD HAS EARNED ME ENDORSEMENTS FROM THE SIERRA CLUB AND CLEAN WATER ACTION, AND I'VE BEEN PROUD TO HAVE BEEN ENDORSED BY MANY DEMOCRATIC CLUBS, BUT THE TEXAS ALLIANCE OF RETIRED AMERICANS, THE ASIAN AMERICAN POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE, AND THE AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOODS COUNCIL.

NOW I RESPECTFULLY ASK FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN THE DISTRICT 9 CITY COUNCIL RACE SO THAT TOGETHER WE CAN CONTINUE WORKING TO MAKE AUSTIN THE BEST CITY IN THE NATION.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

YOU CAN LEARN MORE AT [KATHIEFORAUSTIN.COM](http://KATHIEFORAUSTIN.COM).

>> MY NAME IS DANIELLE SKIDMORE.

I'M A SPECIAL NEEDS PARENT. I'M A TRANSPORTATION ENGINEER.

I'M AN OUT AND PROUD TRANSGENDER WOMAN.

AND I'M RUNNING FOR AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL IN DISTRICT 9.

I'M ONE OF FIVE CHILDREN FROM A WORKING CLASS FAMILY IN PHILADELPHIA, BUT AUSTIN HAS BEEN MY FAMILY'S HOME FOR OVER 24 YEARS NOW.

OUR FIRST HOUSE WAS IN OLD WEST AUSTIN ON THE EDGE OF CLARKSVILLE.

WE LOVE THAT NEIGHBORHOOD AND HAVE MANY MEMORIES THERE, FROM HELPING TO COMPLACENT THE COMMUNITY GARDEN AT THE HASKELL HOUSE SO OUR NEIGHBORS COULD ENJOY GREEN SPACE AND FRESH PRODUCE, TO NOW RUNNING OUR CAMPAIGN OFFICE JUST DOWN THE STREET.

BUT MY SON PETER IS IN A WHEELCHAIR, AND HAVING STAIRS IN OUR HOUSE BECAME TOO CHALLENGING.

ACCESSIBLE HOUSING OPTIONS ON THE WEST SIDE WERE SCARCE, AND THAT BROUGHT US DOWNTOWN.

MOVING DOWNTOWN WAS A BIT OF A HOMECOMING FOR ME.

GROWING UP IN PHILADELPHIA, I ENJOYED THE BENEFITS OF LIVING IN A CITY.

ALL OF US NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS WALKED TO SCHOOL, AND IN THE EVENINGS MY SIBLINGS AND I WOULD MEET MY DAD AT THE BUS STOP WHEN HE CAME HOME FROM WORK AT THE NAVY YARD.

I'D LIKE TO HEAR MORE STORIES LIKE THAT HERE IN AUSTIN, BUT WE HAVE STRUGGLED WITH A MENTALITY THAT HAS DIVIDED OUR CITY RATHER THAN CONNECTING IT.

NEIGHBORHOODS AND ELSEWHERE, EAST AND WEST, OLD AND NEW. GREAT CITIES ARE A PATCHWORK QUILT OF DIVERSITY, AND AUSTIN IS A GREAT CITY.

WHEN I LOOK AT AUSTIN IN 2018, THE CITY LOVE ENOUGH TO HAVE PLANTED MY ROOTS AND MADE MY HOME HERE FOR A QUARTER OF A CENTURY, I SEE A SPECIAL PLACE THAT TOUCHES SO MANY OF OUR HEARTS.

IT PULLS US IN AND KEEPS US HERE.

BUT THE ABSENCE OF HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IS KEEPING US APART.

THE ABSENCE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND RISING PROPERTY TAXES ARE PUSHING PEOPLE OUT.

AND OVER THE LAST DECADE WE'VE ONLY SEEN THESE PROBLEMS GET WORSE.

OUR CURRENT LEADERSHIP IS SERVING A SELECT FEW INSTEAD OF SERVING THE NEEDS OF ALL OF AUSTIN.

WE MUST DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

WE NEED A NEW APPROACH TO SOLVING THESE PROBLEMS.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE LOCALLY ARE NOT UNIQUE, AND THEY'RE EXACERBATED BY A FAILURE OF LEADERSHIP AT THE STATE AND NATIONAL LEVELS.

WHAT WE ARE SEEING SO CLEARLY THIS YEAR IS THAT WE HAVE TO COME FORWARD AND FIGHT FOR OUR VALUES.

WE HAVE TO PROTECT THE SOUL OF OUR DEMOCRACY.

GREG ABBOTT AND DAN PATRICK HAVE MADE THEIR OBSESSION TO ATTACK OUR MOST VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES.

BUT AUSTIN WILL KEEP FIGHTING BACK.

LOOKING EVEN BIGGER IF WE'RE DISMAYED WITH TRUMP'S ACTIONS, WE MUST PICK UP THE FIGHT HERE.

WHEN THEY GO LOW, WE GO LOCAL.

I'VE SPENT A LOT OF TIME FIGHTING FOR AUSTIN'S VALUES AT THE CAPITOL.

MY SON PETER IS NONVERBAL, BUT I KNEW THAT SPEAKING FOR HIM, TO SHARE OUR EXPERIENCE, COULD HELP OTHER FAMILIES.

THAT'S WHAT FIRST BROUGHT US TO THE LEGISLATURE TO ADVOCATE FOR EXPANDED NEWBORN SCREENING, ALONGSIDE OF THE MARCH OF DIMES, SO NO OTHER KID IN TEXAS WOULD GO THROUGH WHAT PETER WENT THROUGH.

PETER GOT TO KEEP THE PEN WHEN THE BILL WAS SIGNED INTO LAW.

AND I LEARNED THE POWER OF OUR VOICE TO MAKE CHANGE.

THAT UNDERSTANDING BROUGHT ME RIGHT BACK TO THE CAPITAL LAST YEAR TO FIGHT THE BATHROOM BILL ALONGSIDE OTHER TRANS PEOPLE AND SO MANY ALLIES.

WHAT THE EXPERIENCE TAUGHT ME WAS WHETHER WE'RE FIGHTING FOR QUEER COMMUNITIES OR IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES OR COMMUNITIES OF COLOR, WE NEED ALL OF OUR SEATS AT THE TABLE.

NOW, AUSTIN IS FACING SOME REAL GROWING PAINS AS A CITY, BUT WE CAN GROW IN A SMART WAY SO THAT EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE TO SUCCEED HERE.

WE MUST CONTINUE TO BE A BEACON FOR INCLUSION AND EQUALITY FOR OUR STATE AND THE COUNTRY.

WE ALSO HAVE TO LOOK AT OUR OWN BACKYARD AND ASK OURSELVES, WHAT DOES A MORE EQUITABLE AUSTIN LOOK LIKE?

I'M RUNNING BECAUSE IT'S TIME TO BUILD AFFORDABLE HOUSING THROUGHOUT ALL OF AUSTIN.

I'M RUNNING BECAUSE IT'S TIME FOR REAL LEADERSHIP ON COUNCIL TO MOVE US TOWARDS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION THAT WORKS FOR ALL OF AUSTIN.

I'M RUNNING BECAUSE WE CAN'T CALL OURSELVES A SUSTAINABLE CITY IF WE CONTINUE TO SPRAWL AND FORCE PEOPLE TO COMMUTE LONGER DISTANCES TO WORK OR SCHOOL.

I'M READY TO BE A VOICE FOR ALL OF OUR COMMUNITIES.

YES, I DO THINK IT'S TIME FOR A TRANSPORTATION ENGINEER ON CITY COUNCIL.

AND IT'S NOT LOST ON ME THAT BEING THE FIRST OPENLY TRANSGENDER PERSON EVER ELECTED IN THE STATE OF TEXAS WILL SEND A POWERFUL MESSAGE TO OUR CAPITAL ABOUT OUR VALUES AS A CITY.

BUT SINCE I'M RUNNING TO REPRESENT ALL OF YOU, I WANT TO TURN THIS BACK AROUND TO Y'ALL.

HAS AUSTIN BECOME MORE AFFORDABLE FOR YOU OVER THE PAST SEVEN YEARS?

HAS TRAFFIC IMPROVED?

OUR CURRENT COUNCIL VOTED FOR TERM LIMITS SO WE COULD HAVE TRULY REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN THIS CITY.

BECAUSE AS THE CITY EVOLVES, OUR LEADERSHIP MUST EVOLVE WITH IT.

IT'S TIME TO TRY A NEW PLAN FROM A NEW PERSPECTIVE TO SOLVE OUR CHALLENGES.

IT'S TIME FOR NEW LEADERSHIP IN DISTRICT 9.

I HOPE YOU'LL KEEP THIS IN MIND AS YOU HEAD TO THE BALLOT BOX THIS NOVEMBER.

AND CONSIDER THAT IF THE PUZZLE REMAINS UNSOLVED, MAYBE IT'S TIME TO PUT AN ENGINEER TO WORK.

MY NAME IS DANIELLE SKIDMORE, AND I'M RUNNING TO REPRESENT YOU ON AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL.

THANK YOU.

>> HI THERE.

MY MAM IS LINDA O'NEAL, AND I AM RUNNING FOR CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 9.

I'VE LIVED IN AUSTIN FOR OVER 40 YEARS.

I GREW UP IN NORTH AUSTIN.

MY MOTHER MANAGED THESE APARTMENT COMPLEXES CALLED PLAZA DEL NORTE.

WE BOTH CAME HERE FROM VIETNAM.

AND MY MOTHER RENTED TO OTHER IMMIGRANTS, AND SO WE LIVED IN A VERY IMMIGRANT RICH NEIGHBORHOOD, A WORKING CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD.

AND THAT'S THE KIND OF AUSTIN THAT I GREW UP IN.

I BELIEVE IN THE WORKING CLASS, AND I BELIEVE IN THE CREATIVE CLASSES.

AND THAT'S THE REASON WHY I'M RUNNING FOR CITY COUNCIL.

BECAUSE I FEEL LIKE THESE CLASSES ARE BEING PUSHED OUT OF OUR CITY.

I THINK ONE OF THE WAYS WE CAN FIGHT AFFORDABILITY OR THE EXPENSIVENESS OF THE CITY IS TO END CORPORATE SUBSIDIES.

WE ARE GIVING AWAY OUR LAND.

WE HAVE GIVEN SUBSIDIES TO SAMSUNG, THE DOMAIN, PRECOURT.

AND I WONDER WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE GAVE THOSE SUBSIDIES OR GAVE THOSE INCENTIVES INSTEAD TO LOCAL BUSINESSES AND HOW MUCH OUR LOCAL BUSINESSES WOULD THRIVE?

WE TALK ABOUT KEEPING IT WEIRD IN AUSTIN.

BUT YOU KEEP IT WEIRD BY SUPPORTING YOUR LOCAL BUSINESSES.

WE NEED TO INCENTIVIZE LANDLORDS TO GIVE LONGER LEASES, NOT ONLY TO COMMERCIAL, BUT ALSO TO RESIDENTS.

ANOTHER WAY WE CAN MAKE THIS TOWN MORE AFFORDABLE IS TO RESEARCH LEASE TO PURCHASE PROGRAMS.

AND THE CITY THAT IS DOING IT WELL IS CLEVELAND.

THEY'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR 20 YEARS, AND THEY HAVE AN 80% RATE WHERE PEOPLE WHO HAVE EARNED EQUITY IN THEIR RENT NOW OWN THEIR HOMES.

THEY ALSO HAVE A MUSICIANS COLONY IN CLEVELAND, WHERE MUSICIANS LIVE IN AN APARTMENT AND AFTER 15 YEARS THEY CAN USE THAT MONEY TO BUY A HOME.

WE WANT PEOPLE TO SET ROOTS HERE.

WE WANT PEOPLE TO STAY HERE.

AND I THINK THAT'S A WAY WE CAN KEEP THIS CITY MORE AFFORDABLE.

WE ALSO HAVE A HOMELESS PROBLEM IN THIS CITY AND IT'S GOING TO GET WORSE BECAUSE OF OUR AFFORDABILITY ISSUES.

I BELIEVE IN A HOUSING FIRST POLICY.

IN UTAH, A VERY CONSERVATIVE STAYS, THEY HOOK ON A HOUSING FIRST INITIATIVE, AND THEY BROUGHT DOWN THEIR HOMELESSNESS BY 90%.

WE ALSO HAVE A CHRISTIAN GROUP WHO HAS PURCHASED 27 ACRES TO HOUSE THE HOMELESS, AND THEY GIVE THEM CLASSES IN FINANCIAL LITERACY, AND THEY GIVE THEM SERVICES IN MENTAL HEALTH. AND IT'S WORKING.

SO WHY NOT BORROW SOME OF THOSE IDEAS OR WHY NOT BRING SOME OF THOSE IDEAS INTO THE FRAY?

RIGHT?

WE DON'T HAVE TO REINVENT THE WHEEL TO HELP THE HOMELESS.

BUT IT'S MORE EXPENSIVE TO DO NOTHING THAN IT IS TO DO SOMETHING.

IT'S \$4,700 TO STAY OVERNIGHT AT A HOSPITAL.

IT'S A \$1,400 COST IN EMERGENCY ROOM.

IT'S A \$900 COST TO THE AMBULANCE.

IF WE CAN IF WE CAN MINIMIZE THAT BY DOING HOUSING FIRST, WE COULD REALLY MAKE SOME CHANGES WITH OUR HOMELESS POPULATION.

MY HUSBAND IS A FIREFIGHTER, AND HE SEES HE DEALS WITH THE HOMELESS EVERY DAY.

WE NEED MENTAL SERVICES, AND WE NEED TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR HOUSING FIRST.

ANOTHER ISSUE I'D LIKE TO ADDRESS THAT NOBODY REALLY IS TALKING ABOUT BECAUSE I THINK THEY'RE AFRAID IS THAT WE HAVE LEAD IN THE WATER.

"AUSTIN AMERICAN STATESMAN" AND KUT REPORTED THAT LEAD WAS FOUND IN NINE AUSTIN AREA SCHOOLS.

AND A LOT OF THIS LEAD IS NOT JUST FROM OUR AGING PIPELINES, BUT FROM THE DEMOLITIONS THAT WE ARE DOING IN DISTRICT 9.

THE DEMOLITIONS THAT WE ARE DOING ARE UNSAFE.

WE USE A DRY DEMOLITION METHOD.

IF WE USE A BALTIMORE STYLE DEMOLITION METHOD, OR A WET DEMOLITION METHOD, WE CAN STOP THE SPREAD OF LEAD DUST GOING INTO THE AIR, WHICH IS MORE HARMFUL THAN THE AGING PIPELINES.

SO WHAT I'M ASKING FOR IS YOUR VOTE.

I AM A CANDIDATE WHO REALLY BELIEVES IN THE PEOPLE, THE CREATIVE AND THE WORKING CLASS OF AUSTIN.

I AM NOT IN IT FOR THE MONEY.

I DON'T WANT YOUR MONEY.

I JUST NEED YOUR VOTE NOVEMBER 6, AND I ASK FOR IT.

THANK YOU.