

Baldeh campaign: Alder Samba Baldeh announces candidacy for assembly 48th district

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As I thought about announcing my candidacy for the Democratic nomination for State Assembly District 48, I recalled my childhood in the west African nation of The Gambia where, to help my nomadic parents, my days were spent tending livestock in the bush.

Later, they allowed me to attend a “western” school which required a six mile hike each way. I learned to read, speak English and most importantly, that there was an exciting and unknown world that I should explore.

As a college student, I was active in the movement against the nation’s dictator and I soon knew that I had to leave my home and emigrate to the US for a viable future.

Now, twenty years later, through the help of many people, I am, by most measures, a “success.” I am an IT Project Manager at American Family Insurance. My wife, Fatou and I own a new house on the far Eastside. I am in my third term as a member of the Madison Common Council. I have attained what many believe to be the American Dream.

But, I have not forgotten my own experience of great poverty. I know that many in our community do not share my good fortune. They have unmet needs for housing, health care and often, food. Many others are only a paycheck away from this plight. These are big problems that require systemic solutions.

In my second term, I was honored to be elected as the Council President. As the Council President, I had the opportunity to work throughout the city. I worked

with elected officials, community leaders and business owners and learned more about the strengths and needs of our community.

From my work on the Council and in the community, I know there is important work that should be addressed by the state. Unfortunately, much of the state government is deadlocked and progress is at a standstill.

I am running to create a Wisconsin that works for all people, not just a few. As I did in my campaign for the Madison Common Council, I will bring together a diverse group of individuals and communities and encourage all to share their perspectives. I will listen to these conversations and reflect what I've learned in my work as their representative. As a servant-leader I am confident that together we can succeed and bring about the changes we aspire to.

In my conversations with community members, I have heard that these problems are the areas of greatest concern:

Health Care Access: I support Gov. Evers' efforts to expand Medicaid for thousands who have no health care. Bringing hundreds of millions of federal dollars into the state will also create many jobs.

Education: Schools funding should not rely on the regressive property tax. I support local control of schools but will work to relieve the burden of taxation on homeowners and renters. The state should keep its promise of two-thirds funding of schools.

Building a Strong Economy: Our economy is not working for everyone. Wages are stagnant and family dairy farms are rapidly closing. We must make strategic investments to ensure that all sectors within our communities are able to thrive. Criminal Justice Reform: It is time to reform our criminal justice system to provide safer communities.. Wisconsin trails much of the nation in prison and criminal justice reform.

Climate Change: I strongly support Governor Evers' commitment to providing 100 percent carbon-free energy by 2050. Adopting greater use of renewables is an important part of our economic growth and environmental health agenda.

Housing: In the richest country on earth no person should be homeless or sleep in the streets. The legislature's refusal to enact bi-partisan measures to relieve

homelessness is shameful. I will fight for affordable housing, so no one sleeps in the streets.

Women's Rights: We must secure the rights of women against sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination. The legislature should fully fund the testing of rape kits and other tools for investigation of sexual assault.

Support Elderly Residents: Too many of our elderly residents are struggling with fixed income and escalating health care costs and property taxes. These issues must be addressed by the state government.

What People Say About Samba Baldeh:

Bob Schaefer: Ridgewood Neighborhood Association

"Ald. Baldeh has been a strong advocate for our community on the important issues, water quality, safeguarding our community from the F-35s and getting a new library and community center. He's a hard worker for the things that he believes are right."

Masood Akhtar, Entrepreneur and Anti-Hate Activist

"I endorse Ald Baldeh because he is a compassionate and thoughtful leader who listens to, engages with and advocates for all."

David Ahrens, former Alder, Madison Common Council:

"Ald Baldeh's election to Council President in his third year was unprecedented. It was a clear indication of the trust and respect of his colleagues for his abilities. Despite his success in the business and political worlds, Samba is humble and mindful of the path that he has traveled. He is fully committed to helping others who are less fortunate."

Endorsements as of 3/10/20

Common Council

Syed Abbas

Barbara Harrington-McKinney Sheri Carter

Zachary Henak

Dane County Supervisors

Yogesh Chawla - D6

Andrew Schauer - D21

School Boards

Gloria Reyes – MMSD Board President

Andrew McKinney – Monona Grove School District Board President

Ismael Ozanne – Dane County District Attorney