

2007 Kansas City, Mo City Council Election

Candidate Responses to Labor Questionnaire

Heartland Labor Forum

90.1 KKFI

March 22, 2007

The following questions reflect issues of concern to the organized and unorganized labor community of Kansas City, Mo. This survey was distributed to all candidates running for a seat on the City Council. Only those whose responses are shown here replied to our survey.

KNOWN LABOR ENDORSEMENTS

Hermann (1st at Large):

Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO
Greater KC Building & Const. Trades Council
United Auto Workers CAP Council

Skaggs (1st Dist.):

Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO
Greater KC Building & Const. Trades Council
United Auto Workers CAP Council

Ford (2nd at Large):

Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO
Greater KC Building & Const. Trades Council
United Auto Workers CAP Council

Johnson (2nd Dist.):

Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO

Chris Byrd (2nd Dist.):

M. Curls (3rd at Large):

Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO
Carpenters District Council
Carpenters Local 1925
KC Police Officers Assoc., FOP Lodge #99
Greater KC Building & Const. Trades Council
Kansas City Federation of Teachers Local 691
International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 42
Millwrights Union Local 1529
Missouri State UAW. Region 5
Operation Engineers Local 101
SEIU No. 1 and 2000
Sprinkler Fitters Local 314
United Auto Workers CAP Council

Williams (3rd at Large):

S. Brooks (3rd Dist.):

United Auto Workers CAP Council

McFadden-Weaver (3rd Dist.):

Greater KC Building & Const. Trades Council
Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO

Gottstein (4th at Large):

Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO
Greater KC Building & Const. Trades Council
United Auto Workers CAP Council

Gamble (4th at Large):

Carpenters Union

Solomon (4th Dist.):

Marcason (4th Dist.):

Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO
Carpenters District Council
International Association of Fire Fighters Local 42
Public Safety Concern (Fire Chiefs Local 3808)
Greater KC Building & Const. Trades Council
United Auto Workers CAP Council
SEIU
KCMO Federation of Teachers
Labor's Educational & Political Club Independent
Iron Workers Local 10
Sheet Metal Workers
IBEW, Local 124
Teamsters, Local 41
Operating Engineers Local 101
Roofers Local 20
Millwrights Union Local No. 1529
Floorlayers Local Union 1181
United Auto Workers CAP Council

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Circo (5th at Large):

Carpenters District Council
Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO
Greater KC Building & Const. Trades Council
International Association of Fire Fighters Locals
3808 and 42
KC Police Officers Association
SEIU
United Auto Workers CAP Council

M. Brooks (5th at Large):

Riley (5th Dist.):

Greater KC Building & Const. Trades Council
Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO

Porter (5th Dist):

Jolly (6th at Large):

KC Police Officers Association
Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO
Greater KC Building & Const. Trades Council
United Auto Workers CAP Council
SEIU Local 1

McShane (6th at Large):

Sharp (6th Dist):

Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO
Greater KC Building & Const. Trades Council
Teamsters Locals 41 & 541
Carpenters District Council

D. Curls (6th Dist.):

United Auto Workers CAP Council
American Federation of Teachers

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Regarding City Employees:

1. What is your plan for retaining and recruiting highly qualified, experienced city employees given that wages for many positions are below those in the private sector?

M. Curls (3rd at Large): Retaining employees that already work for the city should include regular cost of living raises across the board. A homeowner's package whereby qualified new employees would receive tax breaks or discounts for purchasing a home in K.C. could encourage new recruits.

Gamble (4th at Large): It is absolutely essential that we pay competitive salaries for City employees. In addition, I truly believe that when you do business the right way, you will earn employee loyalty. In my hotels, I have virtually no turnover. This is very rare in the hospitality industry. But it's important to me that all of them receive a fair wage and health insurance. Often times, decisions like these are not only the right thing to do, but they also make business sense.

Marcason (4th Dist.): As a non-profit executive, I have considerable experience hiring and retaining highly qualified personnel on a limited budget. The key is making sure that the work is meaningful, that adequate training is available, that there are performance measures and rewards, and that the atmosphere is conducive to teamwork and pleasant working conditions.

Circo (5th at Large): We need to make it a priority that our skilled employees are fairly compensated. One component to delivering good basic services are the employees we put on the job. Continuing education and training, moral boosters and good wages are ways to retain exceptional employees.

M. Brooks (5th at Large): It is imperative that the city get and keep qualified and experienced employees. The public vs. private sector dilemma is very tough. It plagues not only public employees, but employees working in not for profit arenas. When there is no way to compete along economic lines with the private sector, the city has a duty to provide alternative motivation such as a positive work environment, a communicated value to the jobs (whether you are a call taker for the water department or the director, city employees should be treated and projected as essential components of what keeps the city going, employee recognition initiatives, and quality training and development that fosters upward mobility. And, to take this question one step further, there must be greater effort given to partner with the area colleges and universities (Metropolitan Community Colleges, Rockhurst, Avila, UMKC, Devry, etc) to investigate areas for internships and other recruitment opportunities that encourage our homegrown resources to stay in Kansas City and not be picked off by other markets. Money is a major factor; however, it's not just the money, it's the entire package that Kansas City must focus on.

Riley (5th Dist.): In recent budgets, I have worked with the council and city manager to correct some of the wage inequities for city employees -- increasing salaries as much as 40% for some positions. As a member of the council, I will work with the mayor and city manager to continue to raise public employee salaries to a level equal with their private sector counterparts and include regular pay raises in each budget.

Sharp (6th Dist): Although wages for some positions were increased recently, I favor a comprehensive, independent study to compare city wage rates with rates for comparable positions in the private sector. I believe such a study should also examine whether positions now held primarily by females or paid equally to comparable positions now held primarily by males. If the study shows increases are needed, these should be promptly implemented.

D. Curls (6th Dist.): Salaries of entry level workers at the city recently increased to living wage standards. Which means compensation for employees will have to be increased in order to retain, and recruit highly qualified, experienced city employees. I plan to work with the city manager, Mayor and my colleagues on the council to find money in the budget to bring city employees pay closer to levels of other cities employees.

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2. What is your position on outsourcing or privatization of city services that could otherwise be performed by City employees?

M. Curls (3rd at Large): It would be difficult for me to approve outsourcing or privatizing of city services that have previously been administered by city employees. As a former state representative, I found that privatizing or outsourcing does not necessarily mean that money will be saved. Recently, at the state level, it was discovered that a cleaning company that was under contract had employed a number of illegal/undocumented immigrants that resulted in the contract being cancelled. Also, many times there is little or no oversight of the company to see if diversity goals are being met.

Gamble (4th at Large): I believe that the City needs to focus on and excel at its core responsibilities, such as providing quality basic services to its citizens. We may need to take some things off of the City's plate in order to make this happen. It is unacceptable that our resident satisfaction with City services is below average in every category. Why can't we be a City where satisfaction is not only above average but the highest for a City our size? This may require hiring Kansas City small businesses that may be more efficient in performing certain tasks.

Marcason (4th Dist.): Government should be cost effective in providing services and should avoid contracting out its obligation to provide services to private sector companies that must make a profit. There are a few specialized situations where privatization has worked advantageously for the City. These special areas should be the exception, however.

Circo (5th at Large): Generally I am not in favor of privatization of City employee's job. I think it is fair to say that the city employees have kept this city going in more than one way - with their job skills, with the resident restrictions and paying their fair share of the earnings tax.

M. Brooks (5th at Large): I am opposed to outsourcing or privatizing any city services. Kansas City already struggles to monitor the contractors we have and the services they provide. There is no reason to believe we would do as well or any better if we added additional city services to the list. The current results or lack thereof from the "lowest bid practice" should teach us the potential outcome of outsourcing and privatization. The quality of service provided to the people of Kansas City outweighs any potential economic benefits that might be gained from privatization and outsourcing. Further, the potential impact on current city employees and subsequent ripple effects could destabilize the current economic state of Kansas City and put a damper on future growth

Riley (5th Dist.): I do not support the outsourcing or privatization of city services. Too often it only results in the affected employees receiving lower wages and benefits.

Sharp (6th Dist): I firmly oppose privatization of city services, and when I served on the Council before I voted to end the privatization of fire and rescue services at KCI Airport. Any "savings" from privatization usually comes by reducing employee wages, benefits and/or working conditions.

D. Curls (6th Dist.): I am not in favor of outsourcing or privatizing of any city services that comes at the expense of union workers. I've seen first hand what outsourcing does to workers, and I will do what ever I can to preserve all jobs and look in other areas for cost cutting initiatives.

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Regarding City contractors and City funded/incentivized projects:

3. Do you support a requirement that a) City contractors and/or b) recipients of TIFs or other tax incentives provide a living wage and/or health insurance benefits to their employees?

M. Curls (3rd at Large): Yes

Gamble (4th at Large): I believe they should pay the prevailing wage and health insurance, but I am unsure of the exact definition of “living wage”.

Marcason (4th Dist.): I supported increasing the minimum wage and was pleased that an overwhelming majority of Missouri voters agreed with this. I’m not sure how the living wage is calculated. This issue seems complex and I would need more data on how this would impact city government. I know there is a living wage formula that low-income advocates use to discuss what a family actually needs to be self-sufficient. I don’t know if this is the same formula with regard to this questionnaire.

Circo (5th at Large): Yes

M. Brooks (5th at Large): I have worked directly with people in this situation and I believe it is a sad commentary on the state of affairs that here are thousands of working people in Kansas City and millions nationwide who go to work everyday, sometimes working two and three jobs and yet are not able to make ends meet. Some of these hardworking people are in households below the poverty line. It is sad that the hardworking people, again working 2 and/or 3 jobs (everybody in the household working) and still do not have healthcare. If Kansas City is using hard earned cash of Kansas Citians in taking care of business owners through the granting of contracts and tax incentives, then these businesses in turn should take care of Kansas City. They must pay them and provide not just healthcare, but affordable healthcare. We must be specific in our expectations and we must be specific in our requirements. There is no place from wiggle room when it comes to the everyday survival of working people. Working class people no longer can afford to simply give, give, give. They need to get and we can make that happen. And just like with the Downtown development, anything we are committed to we can make happen. We have a duty to break the cycle and if requiring City contractors and TIF and other tax incentive recipients to provide a living wage and/or healthcare will do that, then I am all for it. Our working poor must be protected like everyone else in our City.

Riley (5th Dist.): Yes to both.

Sharp (6th Dist): I strongly support a requirement that city contractors and recipients of city tax breaks pay a living wage and health insurance benefits for their employees. This is long overdue.

D. Curls (6th Dist.): Yes, I support a requirement to provide a living wage and or health insurance for the city contractors and recipients of tax incentives to their employees because city and county governments should not contract with or subsidize employees who pay poverty level wages. I believe in a fair day pay for a fair day work.

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4. a) Are current regulations requiring that a portion of City contracts be awarded to minority- and women-owned businesses adequate?

M. Curls (3rd at Large): Yes, in some instances; no in other instances. The implementation of the regulations may be where the problem lies if contracts are not being awarded. I would investigate who is responsible for oversight of MBE/WEB projects to see who is accountable.

Gamble (4th at Large): Yes. However, like many city codes and ordinances, I believe that they should be adequately enforced.

Marcason (4th Dist.): The MBE-WBE requirements that are on the books are not monitored. If we vigilantly adhere to the requirements that are on the books, I believe that they would be adequate. The problem is in enforcement and oversight.

Circo (5th at Large): We need to do a better job at enforcing the city resolution and ordinances on MBE/WBE. Beyond that we need to be proactive in the vocational training and skilled labor training of our young people so they are prepared for the work force.

M. Brooks (5th at Large): New laws sound good, but sometimes simply are pacifiers if there is no enforcement. From what I have learned from my research and my attendance at the countless council hearings and community meetings is that the ordinances and regulations that currently on the books are not entirely the problem. It is the enforcement or better yet the failure to enforce the regulations that has not held City contractors accountable. If the City would simply enforce the regulations we would have greater MBE/WBE participation. Another law on the books is going to be just that if the City (and I mean from the Council) down to the City Manager, to the City Auditor, to the Contract Compliance Officer) do not hold those companies benefiting from the funds of hardworking Kansas Citians accountable. If there is a better way to make the current regulation then let's change it, but if simply enforcing the current regulation will bring about the desired change, which is minority and women participation, then let's put some power behind it and hold those contractors accountable, whether it be through sanctions and/or contract retention.

Riley (5th Dist.): The city's current regulations are adequate if they are enforced.

Sharp (6th Dist): The city's current regulations setting goals for participation by minority and women-owned firms in city contracts are generally adequate, except for the lack of any requirements regarding the actual employment of minorities, women and Kansas City residents by such firms. Unfortunately, these regulations are not as effective as they should be because the city has sometimes waived these goals and has not monitored actual compliance as closely as it should. Also, contractors are allowed to switch subcontractors after bids are awarded, which allows contractors to beat down their subcontractors on charges.

D. Curls (6th Dist.): No, the problems that have arisen with the billion dollar boom Downtown, specifically with the Sprint arena is proof the city has some work to do.

b) Should the owner of such businesses have to be involved in day-to-day operations?

M. Curls (3rd at Large): Yes, the owner or his/her designee should be on site and involved.

Gamble (4th at Large): I believe that the current definitions and requirements for minority- and women-owned businesses are adequate.

Marcason (4th Dist.): The owner should be involved in a meaningful way in the company. Too often people are used to support the MBE-WBE requirements that have no direct involvement in the business at all. This should be part of the oversight and there should be severe consequences for mis-representation.

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Circo (5th at Large): I understand that there are people who partner in business for investment only. But I believe they would want some basic knowledge of day to day operations.

M. Brooks (5th at Large): Absolutely. It is naïve for us to think that as soon as a law is passed, there are people out there trying to figure out how to get above, underneath, or around it. To address those creative individuals, in terms of contracting with the City, it is essential in order to comply with the “spirit” of inclusion at the heart of the regulation, that businesses truly minority owned or owned by a women, must have that minority or that woman’s presence and involvement in the daily operations. Otherwise, the purpose of regulation will not be fulfilled.

Riley (5th Dist.): Yes

Sharp (6th Dist): MBE and WBE owners should be required to be involved in the day-to-day operations of such firms.

D. Curls (6th Dist.): No, to my knowledge that is not current requirement, so I see no reason why that should change.

c) Do you support proposals that would also require a certain portion of a City contractor’s workforce be women, minorities, or residents of Kansas City, MO?

M. Curls (3rd at Large): Yes

Gamble (4th at Large): I would like to see more of our development work go to Kansas Citians. I am not sure whether the best way to achieve this would be to require it or use incentives to get to the same result.

Marcason (4th Dist.): It is unfortunate that this type of inclusion still needs to be regulated. I believe that residents and companies living/doing business within Kansas City should be given priority. I understand that much of the benefit of the downtown revitalization was provided to those living and working outside of Kansas City. City leaders can’t continue to discuss the need for meaningful employment if we are not willing to take a strong stand on providing adequate education, training, and job opportunities for KCMO residents.

Circo (5th at Large): Yes.

M. Brooks (5th at Large): Yes and again, not just on paper, but in reality. One of our core functions on the Council is to make sure that the community as a whole advances. No offense to our surrounding neighborhoods, but our passion and unequivocal purpose is to uplift Kansas City and Kansas Citians and we cannot overlook those groups that historically been on the sidelines. Either we are committed to Kansas City and Kansas Citians, or we are not. We have walked the fence for far too long. It’s time to make things happen in the manner which I know we can if we really want to and I want to.

Riley (5th Dist.): Yes

Sharp (6th Dist): I strongly support requiring that a fair portion of city contractors’ workforces be minorities, women and Kansas City residents. I recently saw a pickup truck at a city construction site with Arkansas license plates and at least a dozen Confederate flag and pro-Confederate bumper strips, and thought to myself, so this is where my tax money is going.

D. Curls (6th Dist.): Yes, but I’m not talking about quotas, I’m talking about goals that could be achieved and I have always believed we have to employ more residents of Kansas City.

d) Should similar requirements be placed on projects receiving TIFs or other tax incentives?

M. Curls (3rd at Large): Yes

Gamble (4th at Large): I believe that projects receiving City funds should be held to the same standards as City projects.

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Marcason (4th Dist.): We could place many more requirements on projects receiving tax incentives from the city. For example, we could require that businesses receiving TIFs adopt a school or provide mentoring or internships for KCMO school district students and teachers.

Circo (5th at Large): Yes.

M. Brooks (5th at Large): Absolutely. The days for taking one position on this thing and another position on other thing must end. We need consistency and continuity in order to for Kansas City to what we already have and get we need but do not have. We are paying either with the hard earned dollars of hardworking people or by waiving the receipt of critically needed dollars to our revenue; as a result, an across the board approach should be taken to ensure Kansas Citians reap the benefits.

Riley (5th Dist.): Yes

Sharp (6th Dist): I also favor similar requirements for companies receiving city tax breaks.

D. Curls (6th Dist.): Yes, as stated earlier, not quotas, but goals. I believe in a diversified workforce, and residents of Kansas City involved.

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Regarding city-wide labor issues:

5. Missouri Senate bill SB 348 is a comprehensive immigration bill strengthening employer sanctions, requiring that landlords check to be sure that all renters are in the US legally or lose their licenses to do business, and requiring police to ask anyone they stop their immigration status. There are several other bills--HB 262, SB 90 and constitutional amendment 119--making English the official language of the State and possibly thereby banning provision for translation services to non-English speakers among other things. What is your position on these proposals?

M. Curls (3rd at Large): While a member of the Missouri Legislature, I saw a number of similar initiatives introduced. I do support employers doing background checks on employees that could expose undocumented workers. Bills in both the Missouri Senate and House as well as in Washington are now targeting the illegal worker issue and I continue to monitor what the results may be. I do not support English as the “official” language legislation because state proceedings are already in English. The language legislation is not necessary.

Gamble (4th at Large): I believe that it is the Federal government’s purview and responsibility to legislate immigration policy. Currently, the Federal government is working on a comprehensive immigration policy that will include border security and a pathway to citizenship. At the same time, I believe we as a City need to pass and enforce misclassification of workers legislation.

Marcason (4th Dist.): (re: making English the official state language) I do not support this. It is very bad public policy

Circo (5th at Large): I do not support them.

M. Brooks (5th at Large): I am opposed to any legislation that would result in inappropriate profiling. I think that anything that places barriers in our communities can not be supported or tolerated. I believe as a body of ??-minded people, we have the responsibility of voicing our opposition to our State and Federal leaders and holding them accountable for pursuing those laws that reflect the desires of the people. We have immigration personnel on the federal level, and we should leave them to do their jobs. The application of such laws is impractical. What are landlords supposed to do to verify the information received. What happens when citizens and other people legally in the country stand in for those illegally here? Will landlords be held accountable for those scenarios. What are the police supposed to do with those people who are found to be here illegally? The police are overextended just trying to keep our streets safe. Imagine the additional time and resources it will take if such a legislation pass. What about community concerns about response time now? What about community desires for community policing initiatives? Our nation stands on a foundation of inclusion and our great state of Missouri must not detour from that course

Riley (5th Dist.): I believe employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants should be held accountable. I do not support increasing landlord regulations for fear that it will only lead to landlords refusing to rent to any immigrant regardless of their legal status. Police officers should not be policing immigrants. Immigration is a federal issue and our local police officers have more important issues to deal with. I oppose any legislation making English our official language.

Sharp (6th Dist): Although I do not know all the details of all the bills currently being considered by the Missouri General Assembly that deal with immigration, I do favor much stricter enforcement of minimum wage and prevailing wage laws and OSHA requirements to prevent unscrupulous employers from taking advantage of illegal immigrants. The federal guest worker program has allowed many immigrants to be kept in near slavery status. I do not favor attempts to turn local police into immigration agents or attempts to make English the official language of the state.

D. Curls (6th Dist.): I am against any type of profiling or discriminatory practices, especially by our government, and I’m opposed to Missouri becoming a police state. Having translation available is aid, rather than having continued barriers put in their way. Most people want to learn how to speak English anyway. I would not support any of these measures, and if anything work to create more bi-lingual opportunities for all.

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6. Kansas City has been active in supporting NASCO and the concept of an I-35 “Super Corridor”. Some say there are plans to build a massive, 1200’-wide, *private* transportation corridor that would make it easier to bring in goods from Mexico and ultimately China. This corridor is already under construction in Texas. Is it environmentally, or economically, sound policy to support the importation of cheap, foreign goods that could be produced locally? Won’t this exacerbate the loss of manufacturing jobs from the region? Will you support or fight further development of the NASCO Super Corridor?

M. Curls (3rd at Large): The NASCO project has been supported by the City Council. Members I have talked with felt the project would be good for the Kansas City area as well as finding a use for the old Richards Gebaur Air force Base. However, more dialog about the initiative is needed. As this concept progresses I would need to study it more.

Gamble (4th at Large): This is a tough question because the corridor could be used for export as well as import. I will need to explore this issue further before I can take an official position on NASCO. However, no matter what the corridor will signify, I will make it a priority to protect Kansas City workers.

Marcason (4th Dist.): I don’t know enough about this project to make an informed statement. I understand that they will use existing highways (not build a 1,200’ wide road) and that they must adhere to all EPA and Department of Transportation safety requirements. I do not support any proposals that cause the loss of manufacturing and other jobs from our region. We must support our local and national companies and their employees.

Circo (5th at Large): I am not in favor of the super highway as it is currently proposed.

M. Brooks (5th at Large): As a municipal representative, I think this plan is outside the scope of our authority, but not beyond our influence. We must emphasize the importance of keeping jobs in our country and protecting local manufacturing jobs and revenue. Nevertheless, to answer the question about economical and environmental soundness of the policy, it is important to point out that the pennies and a few dollars saved on purchases from Mexico and/or China will not cover the cost of loss of jobs and revenue. In the end, our community will pay and working people will suffer. And as they say in some games, “all money is not good money.” Without money, a “good deal” doesn’t matter.

It is somewhat difficult to respond fully to the environmental issues; however, the very size of the proposed corridor raises flags. We have a duty to protect our already over processed environment for today and tomorrow. Further, we must make economic decisions that go beyond the bottom-line. Invisible and unstated and/or understated costs must be exposed.

Riley (5th Dist.): If NASCO is going to happen, Kansas City should benefit from it. But I do support efforts to ensue that our country’s trade initiatives are environmentally sound and do not harm more Americans than they help.

Sharp (6th Dist): I favor fair trade, not free trade. My support for any measures to increase foreign trade will be conditioned on such trade being fair to U.S. workers and companies.

D. Curls (6th Dist.): I do not support outsourcing if goods can be produced locally, and I definitely don’t want to see the continued loss of manufacturing jobs from the region.

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7. Please tell us about any endorsements or support you have from area labor organizations, plus any other relevant experience, accomplishments, or proposals related to working people, whether they be organized or unorganized labor. [NOTE: see Page 1 for endorsements]

M. Curls (3rd at Large): I was a State Representative for the 41st District from 1999 to 2006. I met and served with people from all parts of the state, which gives me a unique experience on bringing people together on issues that affect us all. Some of the legislation I sponsored included:
Regulation of the payday loan industry
Extend the tax for Kansas City's Area Transportation Authority (ATA)
Retirement for K.C. Police Officers
MODESA bill co-sponsor
Voted against Medicaid cuts that affected thousands of Missourians
Held a forum on the voter ID regulations that took affect in 2006

Gamble (4th at Large): I currently employ over 120 people. All of them receive higher than average wages for the hospitality industry and quality health insurance. I have very low turnover as a result. I have been endorsed by the Carpenters Union.

Marcason (4th Dist.): I have received endorsements from nearly all the labor organizations because of my work on behalf of working families as the Executive Director of Mid America Assistance Coalition (MAAC) for the past 17 years. MAAC coordinates the Kansas City metropolitan area food pantries, low-income utility programs, and homeless shelters. I have been an advocate for low-income utility customers, families working to break the cycle of homelessness, and low-income individuals for nearly 20 years.

Circo (5th at Large): I am a member and past board member of Local 42 Auxiliary. I have been very active in functions that pertain to Firefighters Local 42. Functions like golf tournaments to raise funds for Burn Units, t-shirt sales to raise funds for family activities and attending MDA conferences to build our participation in fundraising.

M. Brooks (5th at Large): Everyone here already knows the answer to this question. I do not have endorsements from any labor organizations, but if I can be frank, it is not because I am not the most qualified candidate but simply because they do not know me and the people in high places within these organizations do not know me. They don't know me because they were not with me when I walked and sometimes crawled beneath the bridges in Kansas City looking for the homeless in an attempt to keep them from freezing to death. They were not with me as I participated in the strategic planning with the Kansas City Free Clinic trying to education people about how to prevent the spread of HV and AIDS (and we know these concerns are not just in the gay and lesbian communities. They were not with me when I appeared in Court to defend an older woman who was being prosecuted for housing code violations but who was living below the poverty line and couldn't get help from any of the so-called City home maintenance programs. Labor was not with me when I worked with Re-Start, Union City Mission, and Swope Parkway Comprehensive Health Services to help people overcome their addictions so they could find a job. When you are in the trenches trying to uplift and empower everyday people, trying to make sure that leaders actually serve everyday people, you're too busy to play politics. I am running for the people not for the politics. Labor does not know me and has not endorsed me, but their members have benefited from my efforts over the past 20 years and it is those members that I hope will support me at the polls.

I have decades of working on behalf of everyday people. Over these years, I have appeared before the Council in an attempt to make leadership work for the people, to hold elected officials accountable. What I realized is that when you're on the outside looking in, there is only so much you can do. Even working on one committee, your exposure and your influence is limited (particularly since you are there at the whim of the Councilperson who appointed you. . . It was everyday working who encouraged me to run and have supported my campaign. It is everyday people whose votes I am counting on. I am worthy of that vote because I have proven leadership and demonstrated commitment to working to empower and build our people and our neighborhoods. I worthy of serving Kansas City on the City

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Council because people deserve not only to be heard, but also to be the primary guiding consideration in all decisions that are made. I need the working people to show up on Tuesday, March 27th and vote for me, Michael Brooks, because, I believe that together we can lead this City from the inside out.

Riley (5th Dist.): (did not answer)

Sharp (6th Dist.): I am also proud to have the support of ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), which has been a strong and reliable ally of organized labor on issues such as increasing the minimum wage in Missouri. I intend to be a strong voice on the City Council for working men and women, not just another pro-labor vote.

D. Curls (6th Dist.): I am a thirty year U.A.W. member, and have been endorsed by the U.A.W., and the American Federation of Teachers (A.F.T.), I have held several positions in my union such as shop steward, alt. shop chairman of our political action committee, and Fair Practice Representative. I've worked against Right to Work Legislation, and support initiatives that benefit all working people mostly for organized labor. I've walked picket lines for other labor organizations and I will continue to work for, fight for, and do the best I can do to represent the views of working men and women.