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| **Safe Medford Candidate Questionnaire** |

*Responses to this questionnaire will be shared with Medford voters prior to the 2019 election.*

**From John Falco**

1. Medford's **Unity Resolution** ([www.medfordma.org/unity-resolution/](http://www.medfordma.org/unity-resolution/)) states that we are an inclusive community, in support of all of our diverse population groups, including immigrants and newcomers.

* What can Medford do to help immigrants living in Medford to feel safe?

I believe we all have a responsibility to help immigrants feel welcome, included and safe which is why I fully support Medford’s Unity Resolution. One of my main initiatives since being elected to the Medford City Council was to bring the monthly Medford Police Department’s Community Service meetings directly to our neighborhoods. These new neighborhood meetings, which were previously held at police headquarters, cultivate engagement between residents and the Medford Police Department by providing multiple opportunities for residents to meet the men and women who patrol their neighborhoods. These meetings are open to everyone and have proven to be very productive. This type of community engagement promotes collaboration which is a key component for strong and vibrant neighborhoods and our community as a whole.

As residents, we celebrate our diversity to promote inclusion and, ultimately, to help immigrants feel welcome. Students from over 68 countries attend Medford Public Schools and I applaud the work that teachers and administrators do to make these children feel that school is another home for them. At Medford High School, for example, students participate in Culture Clubs to learn and celebrate the Asian, Arabic, and Indian cultures. The Gay-Straight Alliance club promotes unity, tolerance, and respect for LGBTQ students. Community organizations in Medford continue to work together to celebrate diversity, promote inclusivity, and create a community of acceptance. Examples include the West Medford Black History Celebration, Medford Gives Thanks Interfaith Service, and the various program options at the Medford Family Network including ESL Classes.

* What will you personally do in your elected role to make Medford and its government more responsive to the needs of all residents, regardless of immigration status?

As a member of the City Council, I will continue to work with the Medford Police Department in bringing the monthly Medford Police Department’s Community Service meetings into the neighborhoods. These meetings are a productive way to build bridges between the Medford Police Department and the residents that live in our neighborhoods.

When I was a Chairperson of the Medford Family Network Parent Advisory Board, I met a family new to Medford who learned about the Network’s offerings through a flier that was in their language. Through this communication, the parents were able to enroll in an ESL class while their child received free babysitting. I have always advocated, volunteered and fundraised for programs that support all families from every culture and as a council member, I will continue to do so.

1. Due to changes in federal policy, ICE has detained and deported people from our neighborhoods, breaking up families in the process, even though those being removed pose no threat. The **Safe Communities Act** is a proposed Massachusetts law that will help protect immigrant communities by prohibiting ICE from deputizing local police officers to enforce civil immigration violations. This act would ensure that police resources are used to fight crime and ensure public safety rather than to assist ICE. Would you support a City Council resolution in favor of this bill? \_\_I\_\_Support
2. Medford has an identity as a white, Catholic, blue-collar city. Yet 27% of the population, and 40% of the students in Medford’s schools, are not white, and 29% of the City's residents speak a language other than English as their first language. The racial and religious makeup of the City are similarly diverse, but this **diversity** is not reflected in the City's leadership or workforce, including the public schools and police.

* Do you agree that the city’s leadership and employees should reflect the City's diversity? **Yes**
* If (re)elected, what would you do to help accomplish this?

I continue to support the work that is done by the City of Medford’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Recently the Office of Diversity and Inclusion hosted a Medford Police Application Information Session. Officers who spoke other languages were present to encourage and support all applicants to enrich diversity among our police department. I would advocate for more outreach like this to increase diversity among the workforce in all sectors of our city government and school department.

* What can Medford do to change the misconceptions about the demographics of our City so that we all understand who actually lives and works here in 2019?

One of the statements about Medford that I love to hear is how diverse we are. Many times, my children have come home from school excited to share about what they learned from a fellow classmate who was born in another country. The fact that we have students from over 68 countries at Medford Public Schools is proof that we are a diverse community.

I think anyone who has a misconception about Medford’s demographics should attend a public school event to see how wonderfully diverse we are!

* How could Medford's public spaces, including City Hall, be made to feel more welcoming and inclusive to the entire community?

I believe our neighborhoods, parks, and schools provide safe, welcoming, and inclusive spaces for all of our citizens. From the rainbow crosswalks at Medford High to the murals celebrating diversity at our schools, I am proud of our city!

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**SafeMedford**

*Advocating for the safety and dignity of all community members   
regardless of immigration status.*