

# Immigration Knowledge and Understanding Questionnaire

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Name: **Zack Reed** Date 7/28/2021 E-mail Address: **zachreed12@gmail.com** Phone  
Number: **216-548-4754** Municipality

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Office/Office Seeking: **Mayor of Cleveland**

If different specify here \_\_\_\_\_ Home

Address: **15407 Kinsman Road** \_\_\_\_\_ City **Cleveland** \_\_\_\_\_ State

**Oh** \_\_\_\_\_ Zip **44120** \_\_\_\_\_ Work Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Party Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ Democrat \_\_\_\_\_ Website

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## Background Information

Are you aware that neighbors across our community have businesses being started by people who were not born here? They take risk, they pool resources, they provide wonderful things like restaurants as well as important services. What would you do to increase immigrant entrepreneurship?

**I would build upon my experience working as the Minority Affairs Coordinator for Ohio Secretary of State, Frank LaRose's office to strengthen the bond between government and these entrepreneurs. My administration will intentionally focus on increasing immigrant businesses within the city because this problem cannot be solved through passive alignment. It must be a deliberate effort.**

The city of Cleveland has a rich history of immigration dating back over 130 years. Over this period, immigrants and their descendants helping to transform Cleveland into what it is today and shaping into the future. Immigration continues to play an important role in Cleveland and our surrounding communities. These immigrants are vibrant and diverse coming from every continent and bringing with them unique cultures and experience. Not only this, but they work in important fields, open businesses, and create jobs. They weren't born here but Cleveland becomes their home to. As an individual running for or holding an elected office it is key to understand the international community that calls Cleveland home. At Global Cleveland we work to make Cleveland a place that is open and welcoming to all. We hope that you found the following statements informative and the questions thought-provoking. Most of all we hope that you will join us in this mission to continue making Cleveland a better, greater city and home for all its residents.

## In Partnership with

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### Personal Experience with the International Community

What is your experience serving and interacting with the international community in your own community and NEO at large? How has this shaped your understanding of your community and your role as a leader?

**My 17 years representing Mt. Pleasant, Union-Miles and Mill Creek has afforded me the opportunity to work and learn from immigrant entrepreneurs about their cultures as they also learn about mine. I work closely with immigrant business owners on the Southeast side of Cleveland and have built these relationships within my community even before I was elected to City Council.**

### Transform Cleveland into an International Hub of Innovation

Annually, hundreds of international students graduate from Case Western, TRI-C, and CSU with in demand skills who are not being retained in the area to contribute to population and economic growth. Can you share what policies you will support to address this?

**We have to begin to reimagine Cleveland as a more forward thinking metropolis. Young, educated people want a “Smart City” approach to urban planning. They would like to live in a city that is proactive instead of reactive. This means spotting trends and concerns early enough to implement relevant changes. They would like their chosen fields of professional endeavor to be more flexible and to provide a proper work/family balance. We need to incentivize those who graduate from these institutions to remain in Cleveland. We could do this with expanded first time homebuyer tax credits and vouchers for child care.**

Cleveland has sister cities all around the world such as Ibadan, Nigeria; Lima, Peru; Gdansk, Poland; and Bangalore, India. What is your game plan for making Cleveland a more open and international-facing city to strengthen and grow these relationships?

**I believe one way that we could accomplish this is to put our immigrant communities in the forefront as it pertains to their representation in government, civic organizations and business. The more our leadership reflects the diversity of our neighborhoods, the easier it will be to attract immigrants to this great city.**

Our population loss from 2010-2018 would have been even worse if not for the 37,000 immigrants who moved into Cuyahoga County during that time. These new residents have offset the population loss by 45%. How can we attract more immigrants to move here to continue this important trend?

**We first need to ensure that immigrants know that they are welcomed in Cleveland. As simple as this idea**

**may sound, there is a lot of anti-immigrant rhetoric being espoused across the country. We also need to ensure immigrant representation in our city, county and state governments. I would certainly work with all immigrant communities to assist in identifying residents who are willing and qualified to serve. We must also intensify our messaging around Cleveland being a sanctuary city. I am wholly against any system that requires those fleeing economic and/or political persecution to live in the shadows.**

On average, 500-700 refugees are resettled to Cleveland every year, from countries such as Nepal, Afghanistan, The Democratic Republic of Congo, and Somalia. The Biden-Harris administration announced they will increase refugee admissions to 125,000 a year nationally, up from 15,000 this year. This means Cleveland's three refugee resettlement agencies will receive 3-4x as many families as they did this past year. How do you plan to open Cleveland for these new residents and provide refugees with the opportunity to contribute to Cleveland?

**Cleveland needs to establish an Immigrant Advisory Board that monitors the needs, concerns and growth of the immigrant community, working in concert with organizations such as Global Cleveland. Immigrants need to feel safe, heard and understood and we should be employing individuals who can communicate with these communities in their native language to make the transition less stressful.**

#### [Set the Table for Internationalization and Economic Growth](#)

There are over 1000 immigrant entrepreneurs in Cleveland, are 38% more likely to be entrepreneurs than U.S. born residents. What portion of the economic development office in the City of Cleveland would be devoted to supporting immigrant entrepreneurs under your leadership?

**Stating an exact percentage or portion of the economic development office to be devoted to immigrant entrepreneurs would be premature at this point. Again, I would rely on my experience as the Minority Affairs Coordinator for the State of Ohio to build on my relationships with immigrant entrepreneurs. While I wish to support entrepreneurship across all disaffected communities, including our immigrant communities, I think it would be more prudent to closely examine the office and how it currently functions, while deliberating with the communities that would be most directly impacted by the policies I intend to put forth. I will say unequivocally that I will expand support for immigrant refugees in Cleveland. I will listen to those members of the community who will assist me in expanding that support.**

As evidenced by this information, immigrants are a key part of building a successful and strong regional economy. With a spending power of over \$3B, how will you support integrating this powerful demographic into a regional growth plan?

**I think it is important to engage this demographic on a continuous basis and not just during election cycles. I think we should implement the "CityKey " model, such as the one implemented in Chicago. This identification will ensure that everyone in the city has access to benefits like library cards and pre-paid debit cards. This, I believe, will assist greatly in the assimilation process. Furthermore, the mayor of this city should be the face of a welcoming community and we should not overlook how important public safety is for attracting and retaining immigrants. We must make the city safer as a whole but we must also**

**make clear that we will not tolerate discrimination in hiring, policing, housing and education directed at our immigrant population. We must see our immigrant population, not only as a force to increase our economic viability but as human beings and our neighbors.**

#### [Embrace and Cultivate a Culture of Inclusion and Shared Prosperity](#)

The important and paramount 'diversity, equity and inclusion' conversation happening right now often does not include members of the international community living in Cleveland. Would you support policies in the private and public sectors that take into consideration the voices of this diverse and important constituency? Would you vote for and promote policies in government to achieve these goals?

**I absolutely would champion these efforts. Society is to be judged by how those not in power are treated. Having benefited from the advances made during the struggle for civil rights in America, I am extremely empathetic about the inclusion of the immigrant population in these discussions. This goes back to my intent to include immigrant and minority communities in my cabinet once I am elected mayor.**

Midwest cities leading the way in city wide growth and development through the inclusion of immigrant communities, such as Detroit and Pittsburgh have created task forces or commissions to analyze the effects of immigration on their city, examine the challenges facing immigrants and immigrant communities, and promote immigrant success and build strong relationships between native-born and immigrant communities. Would you support the creation of such a taskforce or commission in Cleveland made up of city representatives, immigrant community leaders, business leaders, and members of Cleveland's non-profit community?

**Indeed I do support an Immigrant Advisory Board to ensure that these voices are heard and that concerns from this community are taken seriously.**

Would you support adding members and staff to the Community Relations Board that represent the changing immigrant population in Cleveland such as an African Immigrant Community Liaison and Arab Immigrant Community Liaison?

**I am certainly in favor of every cross-section of Cleveland being involved in the Community Relations Board. I am open to discussions on how to best make this happen.**

Were you aware that in 2017 Cleveland created a [Language Access Plan](#) that outlines how to engage with ESL (English as a Second Language) and ELL (English as a Learning Language)? How would you ensure implementation of this plan, as such services are mandated by [Title VI](#) of the 1964 Civil Rights Act?

**I will meet with the Language Access Working Group to ensure proper implementation and**

**follow-through of this plan. If more resources are necessary to sustain our efforts, I will work with City Council to appropriate those resources.**

Would you support expanded language training in public schools for English speaking students as well as contextualized ESL support for English language learners at all levels of education and workforce development?

**Absolutely! I believe it enhances the educational experience and future potential of all of our students if they are proficient in multiple languages.**

Do you support more immigrants, refugees, and international students moving to Cleveland/Cuyahoga County? If no, why not? If yes, how?

**I do support more immigrants, refugees and international students moving to Cleveland. I believe immigrants to be the most important factor in stemming our population decline. I believe immigrants give Cleveland a great opportunity to educate and retain our best and brightest and I believe that diversity has always been a strength of Cleveland and we should do nothing to cede our regional advantage in this area.**

Would you like to receive information and data on immigrants and refugee populations and communities in Greater Cleveland? **YES**

Would you be interested in receiving more information from Global Cleveland and our partners? **YES**

Thank you for participating in this survey. We hope you have found this informative and useful as a guide to local policy advancement.