

THE FUTURE CHANGE

A LOOK AT THE MAYORAL RACE AND THE STATE OF OUR CITY

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The primary is over, the campaign signs have come down, and it seems like Philadelphia's next mayor may in fact be Michael Nutter. Will the city of Philadelphia be better or worse off with this man as Mayor, we wonder. As many of you have seen this year the race for mayor has truly been close. It began with a solid campaign, each candidate saying what he had to contribute to the people. Slowly but surely, it became a race to see who could be on top of their game. Congressman Chaka Fattah, who seemed like a nice guy, couldn't seem to stay still long enough to answer questions! He gave a low blow, using the race card to get on top of the polls (Nutter must have to "remind himself he is an African-American," according to Fattah), a tactic that may have cost him the mayoral race. But this article is not to talk about the race, but to talk about our possible new mayor, Michael Nutter.

The hard thing about the choice in this year's campaign is that each mayoral hopeful had it very easy. Think about it for a second: the problems and solutions were so clear that a blind man could see them. The people had figured out the problems that were most important, and candidates presented solutions to, gun-violence, education, and jobs. It was all about presentation and understanding and since Michael Nutter has a daughter in public school and lived in Philadelphia, people were under the belief that he could relate to them. However, many people don't agree with the "Stop and Frisk" aspect of Michael Nutter's campaign. Racial profiling is a big problem for individuals in the African American community.

We already have a problem standing in certain places, why would we want police to stop us and search us when we are simply trying to get from place to place? We have gotten very far in history with the Civil Rights Movement and the NAACP, and for us to take a step back is an extraordinarily negative thing. This article is not saying that Michael Nutter's idea is incorrect because we definitely need the police to dominate certain areas, but not every individual who wears baggy jeans or looks mean needs to be frisked. A person should not be judged by what he or she wears, especially by the police.

Teens are often seen as immature fools who believe they are grown up, but have no idea how the real world really works. There are times when we are given the chance to actually

be heard. One such chance was at a teen-run mayoral forum. The entire forum seemed to be very tame, everything was pre-written, pre-spoken. Nothing seemed real; every candidate

talked about the issues dealing with the school district, they said what the public wanted and expected to hear. It was there that four candidates for mayor, Michael Nutter, Al Taubenberger, Bob Brady, and Chaka Fattah went under fire not just from adults, but predominantly from actual public school students. The youth asked questions on issues that they felt were important to them.

The questions that were asked were generated from hours of research from meetings with parents, students, and organizations throughout the city. The first candidate to speak was Michael Nutter who opened by talking about his passion for the problems that the students of Philadelphia have been going through. He was asked, "What would you do to increase equity by attracting and retaining more qualified teachers?"

All eyes were on Michael Nutter as the audience awaited an answer. He started off by passing blame, saying that it was the fault of the principals, the fault of the district, and that if he became mayor he would do things to make sure that these people did their jobs to the fullest. But the question still seemed to be left open; he didn't really touch on what he was going to do to make a meaningful impact. The candidate that some in North Philly wanted to win was actually Bob Brady, but why? Certainly there has to be more to Michael Nutter's frisking policy, and perhaps Bob Brady would not have really been the precise mayor that Philadelphia needed. Many thought Brady would bring in another era of tight policing and enforcement, like the days when Frank Rizzo was in office. Either way, Nutter's campaign ads were brilliant, staying away from speaking negative smack about his competitors and actually explaining what he is planning for the city of Philadelphia. He even breaks down how he would pay for each thing. This is something that none of the other candidates really seemed to consider. The most notable of his ads starred his daughter, Olivia.

In reference to his education plan, Michael Nutter stated, "My education plan is called Children First and there is a reason for

that, because I want every decision that we make to be guided by children... this is an idea that puts children first, if it's something that is going to help a child. On most incidents a lot of the decisions that are made are not for the benefit of children."

Should the mayor have been State Representative Dwight Evans, who also has an eye for better education and safer streets? Or Tom Knox, who planned to put students in jail and keep them there if they commit an act of violence against a teacher and when they are released they would not be put back in their original school, but in a special one? Maybe Republican candidate Al Taubenberger, who seems like a nice guy, but does he really have the edge to win this race? Taubenberger seemed open enough and ready to tackle the questions that were prepared for him, though he strayed off course a little.

But who do you, the readers, think should be the next mayor of Philadelphia? Do you believe Michael Nutter was the right choice and is the right guy or does the fact that he won makes you unbearably upset?

Community activist Wade Jackson had something to say about his feelings toward Michael Nutter's winning and what he thinks he should have done and what he should do:

"I want to congratulate Michael Nutter for winning the primary election, but there are a few things that I want to talk about. Even though you were running your campaign ads, down in my neighborhood you weren't seen at all and the only time you were seen was May 15, 2007, the day of the primary election. It seemed that this community was forgotten about. When you're running for mayor you're supposed to be all over, and you weren't seen. The only way crime can go down is if you talk to these people, not put them away because they are human beings and they deserve a chance..." To Nutter's credit, he visited the *North Philly Metropolis* office on election day, which we were impressed with.

One question that continuously keeps popping up is why is Al Taubenberger running for mayor? What makes him special from all the other candidates? During his visit to the Learning Center, he answered just that.

"I think I have experienced the temperament and the understanding of what people need to live in a good city and this town is a great city. We could do much better if it's managed correctly, and with a lack of vision this town will go nowhere." Taubenberger remarked. "I have a vision of a clean, safe city to live in where education is the best that it can be. Students [could] have the opportunity for employment upon graduation or the opportunity to go on to college, whatever they choose."

He also stated what he planned to do first if he is elected our new mayor.



CAN HE DO IT?

Racial profiling is a big problem for individuals in the African American community.

"You have to walk carefully in the beginning of love; the running across fields into your lover's arms can only come later, when you're sure they won't laugh if you trip" -Jonathan Carroll