

Mayor Adrian Mapp – State of the City Address March 21, 2019

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said - “Life’s most persistent question is, what are you doing for others?”

It is a call to action, a reminder that every one of us can be an agent of change if we work not just for ourselves but the good of the community.

It was the question I asked myself the day I decided to enter public service.

It is the question that has been the voice of conscience in my ear, and it is the question that drives my vision as Mayor.

I chose Public Service because I wanted to be an integral part of the growth and prosperity of my city

I chose public service because I knew I could be a catalyst for change.

Members of the City Council, Honored Guests, Members of the Administration, Ladies, and gentlemen, Good evening. It is a privilege for me to share with you the 2019 State of the City Address. I am proud to be the Mayor of our great city at such a significant time in its history, and prouder still of all we have accomplished over the past five years.

Plainfield has a long and storied history; evidenced in our architecture, our homes, and our people, and this year is unique as we are celebrating the one hundred and fiftieth birthday of Plainfield. Now is a time for us to showcase our Plainfield Pride and celebrate the legacy that has shaped and united us.

First and foremost, I’d like to thank the people who keep me sane and support my passion for this city. My lovely and amazing wife, First Lady Amelia Mapp and my daughters Ayisha and Shermona. I could not do what I do without your unwavering love, strength, and support. Thank you.

I want to acknowledge our Governing Body as introduced by the Council President earlier and thank them for the work they do on behalf of our city every day. It is a pleasure to work with a council that is committed to building and improving our city.

I’d also like to acknowledge members of the administration and my cabinet, I am only as strong as the team that I am surrounded by, and I know I have one of the best teams that you can find anywhere State.

One hundred and fifty years ago, Plainfield officially became a city, it was prosperous, and had a robust commercial district. It was called “The Queen City” after a city in Colorado which boasted a temperate climate much like the one which existed here back then. So we became known as “The Queen City of the East.” We have a rich legacy of which we can be proud. Our progression was not always smooth, but we have always moved forward. Many of the events that shaped our nation played out right here in Plainfield and we can be proud of our historical past even as we look ahead to the future.

We cannot change our history, but we can learn from it, and it’s helping us to build a city that is SMARTER, SAFER, and STRONGER. Even as we remember and celebrate the past, we are looking ahead and planning for the next one hundred and fifty years.

In 1919, fifty years after our city was incorporated, the beautiful building still used today as our City Hall was built.

That same year another very significant event took place, Neywahsee Ball was born, she is still alive and living in Maryland, but for seventy-five years Plainfield was her home, and she witnessed many changes during that time. She could not be here today, but in February I had the pleasure of presenting her with a proclamation to help celebrate her birthday, and she shared a peek into a life well lived.

Neywahsee Ball was born in Prentiss Mississippi on February 14, 1919, and she moved to Plainfield at the age of 18 years old, where she met and married William McKnight. They raised two children while living here.

She spent several years working as a nursing assistant at Muhlenberg Hospital where my daughters were born and attended Union Jr. College known today as Union County College. She also worked at the New Jersey State Unemployment office for 19 years and was recognized in Nov 1994 by the New Jersey Department of Labor.

Throughout her years here she was very active and contributed much to the community, serving on the Board of Plainfield Action Services, as Chairperson of the Plainfield Heart Association, Director of Camp Crusade and Camp Hope. A Board Member of the United Way - she was recognized on numerous occasions for her community service.

Neywahsee believed in being involved and was President of the Exodus Club, an affiliate of the National Federation of Colored Women's Club, and she worked for years with the Democratic Party. An avid bridge player she traveled around the world visiting China, Austria, France, Germany, Tangier, Australia, and New Zealand.

Please join me in a round of applause for Neywahsee and wish her continued health and happiness as she and our City Hall celebrate 100 years!

Someone once said "Genius has less to do with the size of your mind than how open it is."

I chose public service because I wanted to find new ways to tackle old problems

Over in City Hall, we never lose sight of the fact that everything we do affects real lives, and we work for you, the residents of our city; continually trying to find new ways to provide more services while keeping costs down.

In 2018 we realized that we needed a more efficient way to tackle our response to code violations, so we formed the Quality of Life Task Force.

The QUALITY OF LIFE TASK FORCE brings together all the departments and agencies needed to address all code violations simultaneously. This is the first multi-agency task force in the history of the city, and it's one way that we are working SMARTER, and finding new ways to tackle old problems. It's made up of members from POLICE, FIRE, INSPECTIONS, HEALTH, PUBLIC WORKS, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, ZONING and the BULK DIVISION OF PLAINFIELD MUNICIPAL UTILITIES AUTHORITY.

Let's take a look at how the Quality of Life Task Force is helping to improve the quality of life here in our city.

K. T. is a first time homebuyer who lives here in Plainfield. Her dream was always to have a place of her own, but for many years this seemed impossible, given her income and the stringent down payment requirements put in place, following the recession of 2008.

After attending a homebuyer workshop hosted by one of our partners in conjunction with the City, she was able to work with a lender to find the right level of funding and became a proud homeowner in April of last year.

I chose public service because I believe that everyone deserves a decent place to call home.

Working SMARTER means finding the right partners to work with us as we continue to grow...

That's why we've partnered with New Jersey Community Capital to conduct city-wide property surveys. We'll assess the needs of the community and put resources where they are most needed.

That's why we are bringing NACA workshops to our residents and municipal employees. The primary goal of the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America is to build strong, healthy neighborhoods by making homeownership affordable. We are committed to ensuring that Plainfield has livability and we are helping our residents achieve the dream of Homeownership.

That's why the Homebuyers of Plainfield Empowerment Series has rolled out 11 seminars in collaboration with M&T Bank, TD Bank, Address Yourself and Faith Brick & Mortar. These seminars focus on Home Buying Education, down payment assistance, housing counseling grants, and credit improvement.

That's why a network of over 200 Plainfield residents, investors, and other interested homebuyers and rehabbers from surrounding areas interested in our town was formed over the past year.

That's why our Office of Community Development works with the Police Department to remove abandoned vehicles from vacant properties.

Partnerships make us SMARTER and STRONGER, and we are more efficient when we work as a team. Most importantly we are putting more residents into a place they can call their own, and providing resources to help them make improvements.

Let's hear from a resident who was able to take advantage of our Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), which helps to address a range of community development needs. She received funding for property renovation and was able to make improvements that made her property safer and more attractive.

We're helping residents achieve dreams, and ensuring that taxes are spent providing resources for the community.

I chose public service because I believe in prudent and smart spending by the government

Since I took office in 2014, the finances of the city rebounded from dismal to healthy. We have a steady surplus regeneration of over six million dollars and a 97% tax collection rate. In 2013 Our bond rating was at an A2, financial outlook according to Moody's was negative and there were 33 audit findings. Today we have an A1 bond rating with an optimistic outlook, and had 1 audit finding last year.

The City has maintained its MIG1 rating with Moody's' which is the highest rating for BAN anticipation notes, and is a result of prudent fiscal management.

Over the past year we've been cleaning up our census database, and we had an on-time submission. It is vitally important that we are ready for census 2020 and that EVERY single Plainfield resident regardless of immigration status is counted.

I chose public service because I have a passion for education and I believe in providing opportunities for our youth and those who want to continue their education.

Last year once again we put almost 180 youth to work through the Summer Youth Program, and fulfilling a promise we made in 2017, we successfully launched a FREE Cisco Academy in partnership with Union County College, NAN Newark Tech World, New Covenant Church, and the Plainfield Public Library. The response has been enthusiastic, to date, there are thirty-four students enrolled pursuing the highly marketable CISCO, CCNA, and CCENT certifications.

Listening SMARTER, we focused on what you the residents said about keeping costs down, and we negotiated Insurance rates for employees for 2019 with no increase to the City budget. We also added a Vision Benefit for employees with no budgetary impact.

Additionally, a comprehensive wellness program focused around healthy eating, exercise and emotional wellbeing, spearheaded by our personnel division was implemented. Because healthy employees are productive employees.

I chose public service because I believe that good government coupled with strong law enforcement is the best way to fight crime.

Since I took office in 2014 we have been steadily driving crime out of our city, we have been building a SAFER Plainfield, and we have made dramatic strides.

Violent Crime is down by 54%, overall crime is down by 40%, and citizen complaints are down by 50% as of December 31st, 2018 compared to December 31st, 2013.

These figures speak for themselves, and they did not happen by accident. They are the result of strategic planning and implementation. Continuous community engagement by the Police Department, Numerous youth outreach programs, utilization of technology training tools, hiring residents to police our streets – all very intentional and with one goal in mind... to make us SAFER.

We also launched initiatives to make our roadways safer in response to concerns raised by the community. Based on the results of the traffic studies we installed several new four-way stops, slowing down traffic in residential neighborhoods and at potentially dangerous spots, and we issued 20% more moving violations in 2018 as compared to 2017.

Moreover, we must have been doing something right because in October last year our Police Department achieved accreditation status. What does this mean for us? It's a recognition that our agency's managerial and operational policies and procedures are in accord with a body of professional standards. Accreditation assures the community that our law enforcement agency is committed to providing service of the highest quality and that its policies and procedures are effective and responsive on the one hand, and fair and equitable on the other.

The Plainfield Police Department is proud to be fully accredited and strives to provide high-quality service to the community it serves. I want to acknowledge the presence of members of our Police Department here tonight and ask them to stand. We appreciate the work you do to keep our city safe.

There is one youth initiative spearheaded by four of our School Resource Officers that I'd like to highlight. It's called the Queen City Mentoring Academy, and it runs every day for three weeks in the summertime.

The Academy which is free of charge focuses on Middle School students and has as its motto "Honor – Respect – Commitment." The objective is to educate the cadets about public service. They place a strong emphasis on self-respect, respect of others, teamwork and commitment to one's goals. The cadets participate in structured classes offered in a fun, informative, interactive, educational and hands-on environment.

We have the mentors here with us tonight and some of the graduates of Queen City Mentoring Academy, but before I introduce them, I believe we have a short video clip showing some of the cadets during academy training.

I'd like to introduce some of graduates and the 4 founders and mentors of the Queen City Academy – Officers Jesse McNeill, Ronald James, Bernel Harrison, and Jihad Carter, could you please stand along with the graduates of the Academy who are here tonight?

Thank you – we want you to know that we appreciate the time you invest each year to nurture and guide our young people. People like you make a difference for our children.

Speaking of being SAFER, Plainfield's bravest aren't just saving lives, but they've also been hard at work serving the community.

In 2018, our fire stations opened their doors for tours 38 times, our firefighters participated in 5 career days, conducted 240 drills, and participated in a series of back to school nights. These efforts are not only focused on educating our youth on the importance of fire safety and prevention but also supporting their personal development.

As part of an effort to assist some of our most economically disadvantaged residents in 2018, the Fire Division provided and installed 124 smoke detectors and 30 carbon monoxide detectors at no charge. Plainfield is SAFER, and so are our firefighters. Injuries in the line of duty, have dropped by 34% in 2018 and 55% since 2015.

It's not a surprise that our Fire Department would want to spend their time and effort to help guide our youth. All recruits since I took office have been Plainfield residents, they are giving back to the community that nurtured them, and it's inspiring for our young people to see their big brothers and sisters serving their community.

We are intentionally making our community safer, one recruit at a time... and we've done it 40 times since 2015.

Let's hear from one of our resident firefighters in their own words

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, and participants in our walk off challenges took a combined 19,000,000 steps toward a healthier lifestyle. That's the equivalent of 9500 miles.

A Healthier Plainfield is a STRONGER Plainfield, and 2018 was a big year for the Mayor's Wellness Campaign. Under this campaign, the Health Division kicked off the first-ever Walk-Off Challenge, substantially increased its community education and outreach, and provided a myriad of free health services to the community.

Not only did we make Plainfield healthier, but we were recognized for our efforts and designated as a 2018 Healthy Town by New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute. This designation is given to communities where Mayors have made health and wellness a top priority and we have done so. We are walking, biking and playing more and we're balancing that with a healthy diet.

Lead poisoning continues to be an issue of concern for cities across the country, so our Health Division applied for and received a \$912,000 grant from the New Jersey Department of Health to protect Plainfield children from lead-related health issues.

Also, we kept our promise to hold our local food establishments to the highest standard possible completing an inspection of every single retail food establishment in Plainfield.

DPW

I chose Public Service because our taxpayers deserve decent roads to drive on.

Safer roads mean a safer community, and since the Spring of 2016 to date, our Department of Public Works has been hard at work milling and paving our Plainfield streets. From the West End to the East end, approximately 91 streets totaling 35.3 miles have been paved. This represents 1/3 of our city streets, and we are not done yet. This year we will resume that work, and we will not stop until every single street in our city has been repaved. This is the commitment my administration has made to you.

I chose public service because I believe in dignity for our veterans and our seniors.

A STRONGER community takes care of its most vulnerable.

If you're a regular at our council meetings, you will know there is a person who shows up for every meeting, rain, snow, sleet or sunshine. He doesn't speak much to anyone. He is there for one reason only, and that is to speak when it's time for public comment. His name is Johnny Pritchard, and he's a veteran.

Johnny has been on a mission to bring Muhlenberg hospital back since the day it closed its doors over a decade ago. This is his only message every single council meeting, month after month, year after year, and we listen with respect at every meeting, because this is a man who fought for our country. A man who risked all he had to preserve the things we take for granted; life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, freedom of speech, freedom from oppression, the right to bear arms, freedom to worship in any way we choose.

Our freedom. which too often, comes at a steep price.

I'm happy to share that after sitting vacant and abandoned for over 10 years, the former Muhlenberg Hospital site is being redeveloped and will house a medical mall complex; bringing medical services back to the site.

Our veterans deserve honor, respect, and dignity so in 2018 our Public Works division transformed the Dudley House into transitional housing for our veterans. The transformation was completed in October, and the result was a clean, beautiful space where our veterans could live with the dignity they have earned.

Thank you Johnny, and thank you to everyone who put their life on the line to defend our country.

Our senior citizens continue to be a vibrant, active part of our community, and I make it a point to meet with them once a month to hear their concerns and share updates with them. From summer excursions to pool tournaments and fashion shows; they are involved in a wide variety of activities. In 2018 the Senior Center provided services to an average of 2,440 members per month and served over 14,000 meals to our seniors throughout the year.

I chose public service because providing high-quality recreational spaces for our community and our youth should be a priority

In 2018 we continued improvements at our 1.7-million-dollar turf facility and installed a state of the art press box, and bleachers at Seidler Field park. At Milt Campbell Field we reconstructed and resurfaced four Tennis Courts, and we added a walking and biking trail in the park. At Rushmore Playground exterior improvements included a new patio, walkways, ADA ramp, picnic tables, and landscaping.

Our recreation division was STRONGER than ever in 2018 serving up a wide variety of activities and programs from summer camp to fully staffed pools which were open all season. Our Adult Basketball League was filled and very popular among young adults. We offered Free Skateboard and swimming lessons, Movies in the Park, Summer Concerts, and seasonal activities such as an Easter Egg Hunt and the Holiday Lights event.

2018 saw the first youth production from our newly formed performing arts group – "PLAINFIELD ACTS". They presented a performance of, Annie Jr., and it was a resounding success.

I chose public service because growth and progress cannot happen unless there is meaningful Economic Development.

Nowhere have we been STRONGER than in our Department of Economic Development. Plainfield is rising like a phoenix, and we are dusting off the ash of failure and disappointment. We have come through the fire, and we are alive... we are STRONGER, and we are ready to soar.

We have earned investors' confidence, and as a result they've put half a billion dollars into our city. This represents 1500 residential units and 400,000 square feet of retail space, and with two Opportunity Zones designated in our Transit Village, the door is open for more possibilities. Not just for Developers but for every resident of Plainfield.

We're working to build our downtown commercial district, and to this end, we've hosted multiple groundbreakings and ribbon cuttings and held many workshops and networking events for business owners. We're adding projects in every ward across the city, and we're linking potential developers and businesses with viable financing and loan programs

The administration's approach to Redevelopment is holistic. With each project, we identify job opportunities for residents. To date over 100 new jobs have been created, and in partnership with NJ build we hosted two career fairs to train residents for jobs in the building trades.

Our UEZ designation which was cut in 2017 was reinstated, and we immediately had 100 businesses signed on to take advantage of its benefits. Several benefitted from the sign and façade grant improving the appearance of our downtown businesses.

LIMEBIKE launched their dockless, bike-sharing program last year and opened up mobility options for our residents. Lime bikes dotting our landscape is now a regular sight, and our residents have been making use of this low cost, accessible way to move around town. Since the launch, 586 riders have taken 1950 rides for a total of over 12,000 miles ridden; and 9,300 hours biked in Plainfield! We're opening the city – one bike ride at a time.

A STRONGER city has a story to tell, and we have been sharing the good news about Plainfield in every venue. We continued our robust ad program with three ads in rotation throughout select markets in New Jersey and New York. We created Business and Restaurant guides, and a New Resident Packet. We've increased our social media presence by almost 650% since 2016, and our twice-weekly newsletters reach an audience of over 7000 people.

Plainfield I am gratified to share that we had an excellent year in 2018, but we're just getting started, 2019 promises even more significant successes as we go through the year celebrating our 150th anniversary.

I chose public service because I wanted to help shape the future of the city I live in and the city that I love.

In the next few months, the vision for a re-imagined downtown business district will begin to take shape. It starts with the Completion of the North Avenue pedestrian plaza as a PLACEMAKING tool to attract visitors and drive commerce into our downtown shopping district. This plaza will be a central hub of food, arts, and cultural activity and a pioneer of SMART technology in public spaces within the city.

In the next two years, we can expect to see significant redevelopment projects in our downtown and across all wards in the city.

We'll see the construction of a multi-sport artificial turf complex at Rushmore playground in the 4th Ward, and completion and full occupancy at the Medical Mall complex at Muhlenberg offering an array of medical services

We're going to re-use and re-purpose underutilized and vacant industrial buildings by creating entrepreneurial opportunities in advanced technologies. We are partnering with Union county Landlords, business owners and Union County College to identify and assess Properties and opportunities. Moreover, we were awarded a grant of \$100,000 by the NJEDA to complete the needs assessment, thanks to Governor Murphy and his commitment to making New Jersey fairer for all.

The City of Plainfield has two opportunity zones that include our two train stations; Plainfield and Netherwood. The zones allow targeted investment funds to these areas and assist with the financial feasibility of Redevelopment projects. We will continue to explore the opportunities presented by the Opportunity zones designation. And it's important to note that Opportunity Zones represent

opportunity for everyone not just investors and developers, call our Department of Economic Development to learn more about those opportunities.

We are working to make Plainfield a Smart City, promoting a greener lifestyle, doing things more efficiently to reduce our carbon footprint, and working with developers to offer incentives to residents to reduce the number of vehicles in a household.

We'll be utilizing the City's surface parking lots to generate solar energy to reduce the city's reliance on electricity generated from fossil fuels.

We want to offer diversity in our mobility options. We currently utilize Bikesharing for a healthier and more cost-effective way to move around town. We're exploring the installation of public electric charging stations and a car-sharing program. We'll have more residential options in proximity to trains offering a one-seat ride into New York City and other metropolitan hubs, reducing the need for multiple vehicles in each household.

We have started an initiative to Implement SMART and innovative technology in infrastructure designs such as Smart lighting, and utilizing solar options where possible to reduce costs and save energy.

Our goal is to continue to regenerate at least \$6.7 million in surplus next year and each successive year. Eliminate all audit findings. Maintain Moody's ratings of MIG1 for Bond Anticipation Notes and A1 for Bonds. Stabilize the municipal tax rate, and Stabilize the assessed property valuations for the City.

To promote the Culture of Health in the community, we finalized the blue print of a Road Map for Healthy Plainfield in partnership with the United Way of Union County and other community based organizations. This Road Map for Healthy Plainfield will be implemented in 2019.

We'll continue exploring community gardens as a source of fresh, organic produce for our residents.

I intend to continue to support and advocate for improvement in education for all our children and those who are continuing to pursue higher education or trade. Quality education is the backbone of a prosperous future for our children and the foundation for overall economic well-being for the city of Plainfield. We'll re-visit the Plainfield Promise which could be the pivotal tool in giving every Plainfield student an opportunity at a high-quality education that is so vitally important for today's job market.

I want to see more of our children involved in stem based educational programs. We will explore the idea of working more closely with regional Colleges to have classes locally in Plainfield that can teach our youth programming and app building skills that can be used as a vehicle to create self-employment opportunities. Ultimately, this will open up more options for our youth and all residents. We have to become a city dedicated to embracing technology and creating ongoing opportunities for our residents. I want us to become a city that is filled with entrepreneurs. We can do this.

We're going to continue to help prepare residents for jobs, and get them hired by ongoing training and certification in CISCO, and other identified essential computer skills; and we'll continue to partner with NJBUILD to prepare for jobs in the construction trades.

In life the results you get are either the result of personal focus, or personal distractions. The choice is yours.

Plainfield... Our day is here, and our time is now - there has not been a better time in over FOUR decades and anyone who tells you different is trying to distract you

Plainfield is SMARTER and anyone who tells you different, is lying to you

Plainfield is SAFER and anyone who tells you different is trying to scare you

Plainfield is STRONGER and anyone who tells you different is trying to mislead you

A gladiator's first distraction is his last, and I'm telling you, that now is not the time to fall for lies, scare tactics and misdirection. Now more than ever we must stand strong, we must stand unified, we must stand side by side, in one accord looking in the same direction; because if we falter, we might fall, and if we fall we may never get up, and we have come too far to let that happen.

We know the desperation of missed opportunities and a failing economy. We understand the frustration of having few options for our children, we have felt the sting of rejection by investors and developers. For years we watched opportunity pass us by, while our neighbors grew and progressed and we said NO MORE. NO MORE! - OUR TIME IS NOW... and we will NOT be distracted.

I want us to be a Plainfield that celebrates our true greatness. Our greatness lies in our pride in our city, our love for our neighbor, and the care we show for each other. We must be attentive to each other and embrace our community as family. Let's worship in our various places of prayer and lift Plainfield up as one. Let's remember to help each other and endeavor to be a City that uses its unity as an asset.

We are SMARTER, we are SAFER, and we are STRONGER, but we must continue to be vigilant about protecting our civil rights. As an immigrant to the United States, I am eternally grateful for the sacrifices made by so many to make it possible for me to stand here as your Mayor today. Plainfield was, and continues to hold a significant place in the history of civil rights. Let us remain vigilant against the onslaught that is being made against the right to vote, the right to keep families together and the attacks that are being made against people every day in this country because of the color of their skin, their sexual orientation or their desire to be fully contributing members of our society.

We must not forget that we are standing here as a better society because of people like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Marcus Garvey, Harriett Tubman, Shirley Chisholm, Bob Kennedy, Delores Huerta and many ordinary Americans who were not afraid to stand up for justice. Every single one played their part in helping to make us a better society. Let us be vigilant in ensuring that we do not regress as a City and as a Country.

In closing, I'd like to say that the vision of One Plainfield, One Future is still the driving force behind every decision we make. My administration remains focused on building, growing, educating and uniting. The energy of renaissance is in the whisper on every breeze; the excitement is palpable. The Queen City is poised to step up and reclaim her crown. We are ready to work locally, and to partner with believers of change on a county, state, and national level. Understanding, that each culture represented here is an opportunity to learn and grow.

At this moment, in this place and time, the destiny of every single person in this room, and our city is interwoven. We have come to this particular instant in our lives because something led us here. Call it destiny, call it fate, call it divine intervention we are here, together right now, and at this moment, united we can change the world. At this moment, together, we can craft the city in which we want to live. A city with a unique blend of cross-cultural unity, we embrace the diversity that makes us

uniquely Plainfield, and at this moment, we can choose to rise above petty agendas and work together to build a city of the future.

We can't do it alone - It takes a community and strong partners to achieve the success and growth that we've had to date and I'd like to thank our City Council, the residents who give their time to serve on our boards and commissions; our city employees, developers, business owners, vendors, professional service firms, non-profits and all the others who work tirelessly every day at making Plainfield a better place to live, work and play. We are not an island and I thank our elected officials at the County and State level, especially Senator Nick Scutari and Governor Phil Murphy and his team for all the support they've given and continue to give us.

As your Mayor, I commit to you that I will continue to work hard for our City. I love Plainfield, and it is in my blood, I went to school here, got married here, had my children here, and raised my family here. It is because of this love and a need to give back that I chose Public Service.

I chose Public Service because I looked around me and knew that I wanted to make a difference. I wanted to fight for those who felt they could not compete and be a voice for those who thought they were not being heard.

I chose public service because I believe that every single child deserves a quality education regardless of his or her economic status or address.

I chose public service because I believe in the dignity of every human being whether migrant or American born, and their right to be free and pursue happiness

I chose public service because no mother should have to choose between paying a light bill or feeding her children

I chose public service because I do not believe that the right to bear arms is more important than the right to Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

I chose public service because I believe that everyone deserves a livable wage, paid sick leave, and basic human dignity

I chose public service because we need to fight global warming, reduce our carbon footprint and our dependency on fossil fuels

I chose public service because I care about Plainfield, I care about New Jersey, and I care about the United States of America

I chose public service because I believe that we can live united as one Plainfield and one Nation, under God, Indivisible with Liberty and Justice for all

I chose public service because it's a noble calling that must be answered. I urge all of you to answer the call and make a difference in your community, the nation, and the world

It's time to trumpet the pride we have in our City and let the world see that we are, Plainfield Strong, Plainfield United and together we are building - One Plainfield, One future!