

Black Leaders Divided in Mayoral Race

Wheeler and Innarone both have support

After Sarah Iannarone released an impressive list of endorsements from the Black community in her Nov. 3 run-off election for Portland mayor, incumbent Ted Wheeler last week highlighted his own support from African American leaders.

The non-partisan contest may be close as a pre-election poll released Monday by DHM Research shows Iannarone, a teacher, small business owner and urban policy adviser, has a lead of 11 percent over Wheeler, who is seeking his second term.

Supporters for Wheeler include two esteemed former lawmakers from Portland, Margaret Carter, the first African American woman elected to the Oregon Legislature, and Avel Gordly, the first African American elected to the Oregon Senate. Current Black lawmakers, Sen. Lew Frederick, a Democrat representing north and northeast Portland, and State Rep. Janelle Bynum, a Democrat from southeast Portland and Happy Valley, are endorse Wheeler's re-election.

Iannarone's endorsements include former Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith; Cameron Whitten, the co-founder of the Black Resilience Fund and former executive director of the QCenter; James Posey, co-founder of the Oregon chapter of the National Association of Minority Contractors; and Shanice Clark, a local educational leader and member of the Portland Clean Energy Fund Grant Committee.

"The current mayor's record is full of broken promises on solutions for houselessness and inequality. He's shown no leadership on civil unrest or public safety. On his watch, things keep getting worse. It's time for a change," Iannarone writes on her campaign website.

Smith said her support for Iannarone was because of the vision she has to bring people together.

"From her plans to aggressively tackle police reform to her commitment to developing



Ted Wheeler

housing that is truly affordable, Sarah is the leader Portland needs to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to thrive – regardless of their zip code," Smith said.

Whitten said his support was based on Iannarone's "unquestionable commitment to making a better future for all Portlanders."

Local activist and Iannarone Campaign Director Gregory McKelvey said Iannarone deserves credit for selecting him as a Black man to run such a prominent campaign.

"Sarah did so long before the current uprising because she is committed to ensuring that Black lives matter in our community and that the common-sense progress Portlanders are demanding becomes a reality," McKelvey said.

In her endorsement for Wheeler, Former Sen. Carter said the incumbent was the right person for the job.

"In a time like this, experience is our best teacher," Carter said. "Ted's experience working with the City Council and other elected officials, the police department, labor unions, and other leaders across the city and state will allow us to stand up and get through what is happening right now."

Former Sen. Gordly said Wheeler earned her support through the quality of leadership he brings to the job.

"As mayor, he has led the city through the outbreak of COVID and the ensuing economic crisis, while responsibly managing the city's departments and finances. Ted has brought people together to denounce hatred, recognizes that we are facing a reckoning on racial justice, and has worked effectively with the Office of Equity and Human



Sarah Iannarone

Rights. Like myself, he was born here and loves this city, and I believe that Ted can bring Portland together around our shared values," Gordly said.

"Voting for Portland's mayor revolves around governing for all of the city," said Sen. Lew Frederick. "I expect disagreements. I also expect knowledge and experience working through those concerns. Ted Wheeler consistently shows not only the rhetoric of a vision for our city, but takes direct actions to make a difference, even when it is difficult."