



GLAA Candidate Survey 2011

Patrick Mara

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

1. In the event of congressional action leading to a ballot initiative in the District that would take away the civil marriage rights now enjoyed by same-sex couples, will you oppose the initiative and publically campaign for the preservation of civil marriage equality?

I have been a forceful public advocate for District marriage equality since June 2008. While I had been a supporter of marriage equality prior to this point, June 2008 marks the time when I came out in favor of marriage for all in my Republican primary for DC Council. I went on the record as a supporter in various media and in my door-to-door effort during a campaign against a Republican incumbent who was not then a supporter of marriage rights for same-sex couples. There were many who told me “Don’t take that position” during the primary, but I believed support of marriage equality was the right thing to do.

In 2009, I went on to testify in favor of DC marriage equality before the DC Council. My testimony can be viewed here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBgbekn-Ar8> or by searching “Patrick Mara” at YouTube.com. Of the nine candidates running, I am the only person running in the At-Large Special Election who took the time to testify.

As the national campaigns for Congress and the White House gear up, DC often becomes a whipping post for elected officials – Republicans and Democrats -- back in their home districts. This ongoing pattern of Congressional interference needs to stop and I am the only candidate currently running that has a proven record of working with Republican Members of Congress to preserve marriage equality.

Over the last several years, the *Washington Post*, *Metro Weekly* and *Washington Blade* have written stories about my efforts to meet with Republican Members of Congress and senior staff members. To date, I have met with almost twenty GOP Members of Congress and Senators to discuss “staying out of DC.” As a Republican, I can make a strong case for Federalism. In fact, I have met with some of the most Conservative Republican Members, such as Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) to the most Progressive like Senator Scott Brown (R-MA). In these meetings I stress the need for DC’s 600,000 residents to decide our own fate. A strong argument for marriage equality is made in each of these meetings. This year, I’ve already met with Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA) and all his Senior Committee staff. The elected officials in DC are not doing a sufficient job of communicating DC interests to Republican Members.

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When Members of Congress are first elected, they are new to DC and we must build relationships with them. We cannot continue the practice of ignoring Members of Congress who may not agree with us. We must work with them; educate them and their staff on important DC issues including DC's marriage equality laws. If elected, I commit to meet with 80+ Republican Members of Congress and Senators to educate them on why it is important to leave us alone. That is an average of one meeting per week for the duration of my term as an At-Large member of the Council. This has never been done before, but we are currently not engaging Congressional Leaders in any way. It's one thing to protest, declare your support for marriage equality at a forum or write an op ed. It is another to meet with GOP Members in their offices and explain to them why we may disagree.

In short, I am the only candidate running who has a record of advocating for marriage equality on Capitol Hill to our harshest critics. I am the candidate who is best suited to fend off any type of Congressionally mandated action on marriage. I understand the urgency of protecting our unique laws and will continue to be a champion of this cause. Should their be any type of ballot initiative, I will most certainly continue to defend all District citizens' rights to marry no matter what Congress does or does not do.

Patrick Mara at the 2008 Pride Parade. Photo from from Joe Tresh.



Patrick Mara at the 2010 Pride Parade



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PUBLIC HEALTH

2. Will you support legislation giving the directors of the Office of the GLBT Affairs and the Office of African Affairs the authority to issue competitive grants as other minority constituent office have, that will be open to organizations serving the populations within the offices' purview?

Absolutely. DC's diversity is one of the reasons I love this city so much. For all that we do to help disadvantaged constituencies in the District, there are still significant gaps in how we treat certain offices, particularly when it comes to funding. Fairness and equality dictate that we give the Office of the GLBT Affairs and the Office of African Affairs the authority to issue competitive grants.

3. Describe steps you will support to improve performance at the HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD, and TB Administrations, including in HIV prevention, HIV/AIDS surveillance, and mental health services.

First of all, Councilmember David Catania has been a leader in this regard. Since he became Chairman of the Committee on Health, the District has quadrupled the number of publically supported HIV texts. As our next Councilmember, I would work closely with Councilmember Catania and support his measures.

As the Ward 1 State Board of Education member, I know the struggles of our neighborhoods. Unfortunately, the District of Columbia has a high rate of sexually transmitted diseases, particularly among young people. In 2008, 7% of all District teenagers were diagnosed with Chlamydia; 1 in 100 youth is HIV positive and teen pregnancy rates have increased.

Our Health Department offers free screenings for DCPS students and treatments for some STDs. I think one way we can improve screening is to implement a way to screen young people during the summer months. One possible screening location could include sites at the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program and popular youth recreation centers.

DCPS standards emphasize the ABCs of STD prevention, which is "Abstinence", followed by "Being Faithful" and monogamous and finally discussing the effectiveness of "Condoms." We cannot stress these points enough to our youth. These are lifelong lessons that if taught properly at a young age could influence their decision making for the rest of their lives.

DC's HIV infection rates for our youth are alarmingly high. Unfortunately, DC tops many of the national averages for Gonorrhea, Chlamydia and HIV infections. That is why, as a Ward 1 State Board of Education member, I am trying to reach out to my community and share with them the dangers that our young people face. On April 11th, I have arranged for the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and the DC State Board of Education to host the "Ward One HIV/AIDS Awareness Workshop for

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Parents and Teens." I am honored to be the moderator and hope to continue these types of meetings with the community as our next At-Large DC Councilmember.

Many of the reforms that DCPS and the Health Department are trying to implement in our schools for our young people to combat against HIV infections and STDs, we can apply for adults. But in order to do this, our elected officials must begin to understand the urgency and to push for stronger reform measures.

I think it's a tragedy that as recent as 2005, the District did not incorporate routine HIV testing into the provision of medical services. I applaud the city and Councilmember Catania for ensuring that our city's hospitals (7 of the 8) have adopted HIV testing as part of their emergency room procedures. As our next Councilmember, I would continue to support these types of reforms.

We have seen significant gains in screening mothers to be for HIV testing. Unfortunately in 2005, DC accounted for 9% (10 children) of all mother to be child transmissions of HIV in the nation. The city responded by the Department of Health ensuring that HIV testing become a norm for screening women in all labor and delivery sites. Since then our city has drastically improved and this is a tangible area to see improvement and be proud of.

Councilmember David Catania proposed and implemented a simple yet common sense solution that has made DC a national leader. He proposed that to make it an institutionalized and automatic practice to HIV test all persons upon intake.

As our next At-Large DC Councilmember, I will continue to make these concerns a top priority of the Council.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE JUDICIARY

4. Will you support a budget for the Office of Police Complaints large enough to avoid developing a backlog of cases?

Yes and I have maintained that stance since 2008. I admire the work and leadership of this office. This is an important part of fostering a culture of inclusiveness and open-mindedness. As our next Councilmember, I hope to meet with Mr. Eure and his staff and identify ways in which the Council can better help the Office of Police Complaints.

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5. Will you support efforts to rein in police officials who respond to legitimate crime concerns with unsustainable, media-centric quick fixes that infringe constitutionally protected civil liberties? And will you do so without waiting for courts to overturn them, as the US Court of Appeals did to the Neighborhood Safety Zone initiative in 2009?

I believe one of the worst criticisms an elected official can receive is being at a crime scene for the press conference, but not being part of the solution. In the past, parts of our city have been targets of violent crime. Some in our community criticize MPD's response as being there for the aftermath of a crime but not dedicating enough resources long enough to eliminate the problem.

I do not think using checkpoints and other controversial measures is a sound approach to dealing with a long term problem. MPD must focus more on retaining seasoned officers in their ranks. I believe MPD can be more effective by using available technologies such as ShotSpotter in high crime areas. However, it is important to make sure such technologies are actually working. In 2008 and 2009 I participated in police ride-alongs in District 6 and District 7 during which ShotSpotter was broken.

In addition to participating in numerous police ride alongs, I have spoken with numerous community groups in Shaw, Columbia Heights and other areas about crime and the underlying causes of crime. I have also been active as a Block Captain with the Northwest Columbia Heights Civic Association.

6. Will you press for increased oversight of the MPD's gathering and analysis of crime statistics to ensure greater comprehensiveness and objectivity, including transgender-related hate crime data?

Yes. MPD must be factual and objective in order to do their job most effectively. In turn, we must be factual and objective in our evaluation of MPD's effectiveness.

HUMAN RIGHTS

7. Will you support a budget for the Office of Human Rights large enough to allow it to keep the backlog at below 70 cases; keep below 210 days the average time it takes to issue a probable cause finding; and expand education, prevention, and language access efforts?

Yes. While I think OHR has made progress over the years, we must work to ensure that the office expeditiously handles its caseload. DC prides itself in being a progressive city and having strong equality laws. We must ensure that Departments that serve our communities are prepared to meet community needs. With regard to language access efforts, this is a critical component that is often overlooked. As the Ward 1 member on the State Board of Education, I have seen the growing level of language diversity in our schools. Ward 1 elementary schools will be majority English Language Learners in the next decade. We have a massive immigrant

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population in which exist an often overlooked segment of the LGBT community. It is essential that we do not overlook the needs of LGBT citizens who are not fluent in English.

8. Are you committed to including a transgender representative on the D.C. Commission on Human Rights?

Absolutely. As a Councilmember, I will work with my colleagues and the LGBT community to find candidates and advocate on their behalf.

9. Do you agree that the Director of the Office of Human Rights should be required to have professional training and experience in civil rights law enforcement?

Yes. However, I think it's important that potential candidates who seek the Director position but don't have this training not be excluded from the interview process.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND YOUTH

10. Will you oppose both federal and local voucher programs that fund students in religious schools that are beyond the protections of the D.C. Human Rights Act?

The place we find ourselves in our public school system did not happen overnight and it will take some time before we see an across the board improvement in our schools. I do believe that until our traditional public schools are where they should be, we will continue to need alternatives. The Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) is part of a three sector approach to Federal funding that includes \$20 million in funding for traditional public schools, public charter schools and OSP programs. The OSP brings with it an additional \$60 million to educate children in our city. Unlike most voucher programs, it does not take money away from the public school system, but brings with it additional Federal resources and saves the DC Public Schools money. While I understand GLAA's opposition to the program, I think the best possible thing we can do is to make sure all our children have a solid shot at life with a minimum of a basic education.

I was educated in both Public and Catholic schools, but am by no means a person who does not accept others who are different. Further, I testified in favor of marriage equality before the DC Council sitting right next to Dr. Joseph Palacios, a Catholic Priest. Dr. Palacios offered data that overwhelmingly showed rising support for marriage equality among Catholics. Admittedly, I am not where GLAA would like me to be on this issue, but this does not make me any less of a fighter for the LGBT community.

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11. Will you oppose the use of either federal or District taxpayer funds to promote “abstinence only until marriage” sex education that undermines safer-sex programs by excluding more comprehensive information?

Yes. It is clearly not appropriate for public funds to be used in this manner. As a school board member, I have a track record working with our gay and lesbian youth in our public schools to ensure that there is an appropriate measure in place to teach our youth and allow them to make their own conclusions. There is no substitute to a comprehensive health education that is clear and age appropriate.

CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES

12. Do you support the right of adults in the District to choose adult-oriented entertainment for themselves, and the right of appropriately licensed and zoned businesses to provide it?

Yes, I believe adults should be free to make their own entertainment decisions, provided said entertainment follows local ordinances.

13. Will you support legislation to curb abuses by NIMBYs who are now allowed to file an endless series of baseless complaints to harass or extort bars and restaurants?

Yes, and as a partial owner of a bar and restaurant in my Columbia Heights neighborhood, I understand the process and concerns for neighborhoods and bars/restaurants. I think the ABC regulatory process has improved and does need further improvement. I believe that at times the lack of decisiveness of the ABC process can cause turmoil for residents and businesses and that is an undesirable unfairness. I have met with current members of the ABC board and understand their concerns as well.

14. What are your thoughts regarding GLAA’s proposal, explained in *Agenda: 2010*, to mitigate the problems associated with prostitution by legalizing and regulating it? What will you do to provide alternatives to survival sex for at-risk populations like homeless youth and transgenders?

No one should feel they have to sell that which is most private to them in order to survive. But as a fiscal conservative, I disagree that the taxation and regulation of any industry immediately legitimizes the trade in question. Additionally, I believe many of the evils of prostitution would persist: drug abuse, sexual transmission of disease, human trafficking, physical abuse, etc...

Due to social stigma, it is politically convenient to quickly dismiss any proposals to legalize prostitution. However, I appreciate GLAA’s analysis of the difficulties homeless gay youth and transgender individuals face as part of the labor force. If elected, I would like to approach this issue on two fronts.

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First, to assure that ALL District residents receive equal treatment and consideration as members of the work force. I believe the Office of Human Rights has made tremendous strides to this end, and I would work with them to continue the progression of equal rights for all people.

Second, I would work to assure that at risk youth and members of the GLBT community are given alternatives to such emotionally and physically trying survival techniques. Provision of shelter, counseling, continuing education, and job training are paramount in my mind. If local government instead of legalizing prostitution can provide alternative solutions to homelessness and joblessness, then I am confident we can make substantial gains in addressing this issue.

Your record is part of your rating. Please list any actions that you have taken that may help illustrate your record on behalf of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders.

Two Republicans Stand By Same-Sex Marriage

By Tim Craig

Washington Post Staff Writer

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Two leading Republicans in the District have announced their support for efforts to legalize same-sex marriage in the city.

Robert J. Kabel, chairman of the D.C. Republican Committee, and *Patrick Mara*, an unsuccessful Republican D.C. Council nominee last year, pledged to lobby Republicans on Capitol Hill to stay out of the local same-sex marriage debate.

"On behalf of a large constituency of D.C. Republicans, we would like to thank you," the two wrote to D.C. Council member *David A. Catania* (I-At Large) last week after he introduced his legislation. "We appreciate your efforts in supporting this long overdue legislation in the District of Columbia. . . . We would like to offer our support in aiding the advancement of this bill in Congress, particularly amongst Republicans."

Kabel is believed to be the only openly gay chairman of a state Republican committee in the nation. Mara, who is heterosexual, has been a longtime supporter of same-sex marriage. He is also widely believed to still have ambitions of joining the council.

The comments from Kabel and Mara put them odds with many of their counterparts in other state Republican committees and highlight the local party's progressive views on many social issues...

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D.C.'s GOP wants debate on marriage to stay local

By Tim Craig

Washington Post Staff Writer

Saturday, December 5, 2009

As the debate over legalizing same-sex marriage shifts from city hall to Capitol Hill, Republican leaders in the District are forging an unusual alliance with gay rights activists, hoping to prevent a national fight over the issue.

Robert J. Kabel, the chairman of the D.C. Republican Committee, and Patrick Mara, a rising star in the local GOP, have begun urging party members in Congress not to oppose the D.C. Council's bill to allow gay couples to marry in the District.

The efforts by Kabel, who is gay, and Mara, who is straight, underscore the division over same-sex marriage between many of the city's 30,000 registered Republicans and the national party leadership.

"D.C. Republicans as a whole, for the most part, are live-and-let-live," said Mara, a same-sex marriage supporter who ran unsuccessfully for a council seat last year. "Since they live in an urban area, they don't really care what goes on in someone's home."

The D.C. Republican Committee has a long-standing commitment to gay rights, partly because of its membership, which includes many gay men who came to the city to work in government. But party leaders tread carefully to avoid fracturing a local party that struggles for relevance in an overwhelmingly Democratic city...

Local gay rights activists say they are confident that Democratic leaders in Congress will help protect the bill. But the level of GOP opposition in the House and Senate remains murky, which is why Mara and Kabel have begun arranging meetings on Capitol Hill with GOP lawmakers.

"We are going to meet and encourage Republicans to just stay out of it," said Kabel, the only openly gay state-level GOP chairman in the country. "Our basic discussion point is, even though this is a federal city, we do have home rule and an elected mayor and council, so just let this process run its course."

Kabel and Mara's efforts are being noticed on the national stage. "The actions that Bob Kabel and Patrick Mara have taken are really at the forefront of what Republican officials have done," said Christian Berle, chief Washington lobbyist for the Log Cabin Republicans, a group of gay political activists.

Berle has compiled a list of 59 elected GOP officials nationwide who have endorsed same-sex marriage, including several state legislators in New Hampshire, where same-sex marriages are to begin next month.

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But Kabel and Mara face a tough sell on Capitol Hill. No sitting GOP senators or House members support same-sex marriage, Berle said...

Peter Rosenstein, founder of Campaign for All D.C. Families, which asked for Kabel and Mara's help, said they have to persuade only a few GOP members.

"There may be a number of Republicans who agree this should be left up to the states," Rosenstein said...

DIRECTIONS

Your answers should be typed on separate paper rather than on this form. *You must sign your name on each answer sheet to indicate your personal commitment to your answers.*

Please return your signed questionnaire responses by Wednesday, March 16 to GLAA, P.O. Box 75265, Washington, D.C. 20013.

In addition to sending your signed hard copy, please email a copy (in any major word processor or text format) for loading on GLAA's website (www.glaa.org) to equal@glaa.org. Thank you.

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