

Bryan Weaver, Candidate for At-Large Council

Response to GLAA 2011 Questionnaire

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 publicly campaign for the preservation of civil marriage equality?

Yes, I believe that any initiative regarding the District's new Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Law is a clear violation of the Human Rights Act of the District of Columbia, and as elected officials we are obligated to oppose any such endeavor. I cannot and will not support any ballot initiative depriving a protected minority of their rights and would loudly and actively campaign in favor of marriage equality should, unfortunately, a ballot initiative ever be held. One can only imagine what would have happened if we put the civil rights measures of the 50's and 60's to a popular vote – people's basic human rights should not be determined by popular fiat. I have spent my entire adult life fighting against discrimination based on culture, race and color — that experience makes it impossible for me not to stand up against discrimination based on sexual orientation. We have been down this road before in this country. Separate is not equal. The rights to liberty and happiness belong to each of us and on the same terms, without regard to either skin color or sexual orientation. Our rights as Americans do not depend on the approval of others. Our rights depend on us being Americans. We're elected not to follow but to lead. We're elected to cast what might sometimes be a difficult, challenging, and politically inexpedient vote. We're elected to represent our constituents when they're right, and to vote our consciences regardless of whether our constituents are right. And our conscience should be telling us to stand up for civil rights regardless of how unpopular it may appear.

Public Health

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

The District of Columbia at all levels of government has a major problem with transparency, patronage and corruption. As an ANC Commissioner I have seen the difficulty of administering small grants programs without adequate oversight resources. Until the District makes a concerted effort to completely revamp its grant-making programs, priorities and non-competitive earmarks for every agency, no new grant-making authority should be bestowed upon any District department/agency. The LGBT office staff would be better used to identify resources for the 501C3 organizations within existing city programs and/or providing council members reports on the adequacy of support services going to the community. However, while at this time I am not supportive of grant-making authority, as a legislator, I will introduce needed measures to the budget to ensure that critical services that have proven effective, are fully funded. D.C. will not be a true beacon of equality if we are not taking care of those communities in need.

3. Describe what steps you will support to improve performance at the HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD and TB Administration (HAHSTA), including HIV prevention, HIV/AIDS surveillance and mental health services.

First let me say that under the microscope of David Catania, HAHSTA has greatly improved, but the reforms are needed. Oversight. Oversight. Oversight. Collaboration. Collaboration. Collaboration. But we have still lost at least \$25 million in dedicated funding to help people living with HIV/AIDS, money which has instead found its way into the pockets of those interested in their own self interest. Unconscionable.



With the highest AIDS rate in the United States and an AIDS rate comparable to the rates in sub-Saharan Africa we need fund and monitor programs that aggressively attack HIV prevention among drug users; HIV prevention education in DCPS; condom distribution; HIV/AIDS surveillance; reach out more directly of heterosexual women of color and mental health services related to HIV/AIDS --- but I believe that should be as part of universal mental health screenings.

I would seek to overhaul HAHSTA grant monitoring, track documentation services that oversee program sub-grantees as grant management continues to be a problem. I would like HAHSTA's funded-training programs educating and building HIV competency in non-HIV focused youth organizations expanded --- and to work more with young women of color. I would like to see the monitoring of the Department of Parks and Recreation ("DPR") summer programs and the Department of Employment Services ("DOES") integrated HIV/AIDS awareness into its training programs be stepped up, followed up on and professionalized.

I would seek to require HAHSTA, APRA, and the Department of Mental Health meet regularly to collaborate to improve the care of shared patients. Condom distribution programs have made great gains in the last few years, but we must continue to map the distribution of condoms and monitor the performance of the programs, and most importantly reach out to immigrant populations and provide materials in their native languages.

I would aggressively seek funding to reach out to the fastest growing HIV/AIDS community, heterosexual woman of color --- who still do not view this as their health crisis despite the fact that AIDS is the leading cause of death for Black women between the ages of 24 and 34. We need to do a better job targeting women in our public relations programs, and strengthen our ties with women's health organizations (Mary's Center for example) to help double our efforts.

Here are some of the areas where we need to improve or change our fight against HIV/AIDS. We need to have vigorous oversight of the non-profits receiving grants to fight HIV/AIDS and we need better program evaluation of those programs.

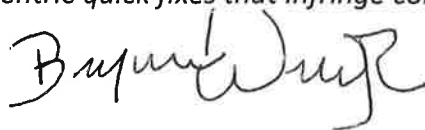
- We need to enact better privacy protections for people living with HIV/AIDS.
- We must overhaul how funds for the federal Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program are used, as hundreds of people are waiting for placement.
- HIV testing should become part of routine physical exams for adults and teens --- high school athletes must take a physical and HIV testing should be part of the exam.
- People held in custody at the D.C. Jail should be automatically tested at intake and segregate HIV positive inmates into a separate ward.
- Expansion of clean needle exchange programs, with better reporting.
- Micro targeting of condom distribution points at public health centers, hospitals, bars, nightclubs, and social service agencies, to permit better tracking.

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, although one would hope that there would never be a need for an Office of Police Complaints, let alone a backlog, but these are the times in which we live, so I would absolutely support a budget large enough to support the office and to make sure that it runs efficiently. When a person has gotten to the point where they need to interact with the OPC, things are bad and the last thing they need to deal with is an under staffed organization that will not be able to properly handle their concerns. I vehemently oppose the idea floated last year to terminate the office.

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 the courts to overturn them, as the U.S. Court of Appeals did to the Neighborhood Safety Zone initiative of 2009?

Yes, far too often in this city, we legislate by press conference. Instead of being pro-active about our policies, we tend to spend most of our time reacting. We seem to have an aversion for best practices. It's time that the District of Columbia look outside its borders a bit and see what's working in other places and how we can make that work here. For instance, San Francisco recently approved loitering legislation that was extremely specific to a certain area of the city for a certain period of time. Instead of blanket loitering legislation that more often than not hurts innocent people, the San Francisco wrote legislation that addressed the problem specifically.

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

Yes, in October 2009, President Obama signed federal hate crimes legislation into law. The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act was designed to protect people against violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, gender, national origin and disability. We must make sure that we are gathering all the information necessary and properly analyzing crimes to make sure that those which can and should be prosecuted as hate crimes are.

Human Rights

7. Will you support a budget for the Office of Human Rights large enough to allow it to keep the backlog below 70 aged 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, the District is going through one of its most difficult budgetary periods in a long time. With that being said it is important that departments such as the Office of Human Rights are funded to the levels necessary to adequately represent residents. Tough decisions will need to be made in the coming years about what we spend our money on, but programs around Civil Rights and Human rights should not be sacrificed.

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

Of course. All commissions that have oversight responsibilities in the District should be made of a cross-section of residents and should especially include a representative of each group the commission's work has oversight of.

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, we need to increase education and sensitivity training programs at all levels of government and to be effective any Director of the Office of Human Rights should have professional training and experience in civil rights law enforcement. What made Thurgood Marshall a good Supreme Court justice is that he came from the background of arguing the Brown v. Board of Education before Supreme Court so he had real, practical experience with the court. It should be no different when dealing with Human Rights here in D.C.



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?

Yes, but with the caveat that I would be willing to support vouchers for private religious schools that adhere to the D.C. Human Rights Act.

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, as the father of two small children, I whole heartedly support the discussion of sexual orientation and all forms of safe-sex in sex education in public and charter schools. The more public and open we can be with our children about these issues the better. There is no one correct way to educate our children about sex. Sex education should be holistic and all aspects, from abstinence to the use of condoms should be part of the learning. Based on this I cannot support federal or District taxpayer funds to promote "abstinence only until marriage."

Consumers and Businesses

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

Yes, I absolutely support the right of adults to choose adult-oriented entertainment and the right for appropriately licensed and zoned businesses to provide it. What happened with many of the businesses where the baseball stadium is now located was truly unfortunate and should never be allowed to happen again.

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

Voluntary Agreements have become a bit of a third rail of D.C. politics. As an eight-year ANC commissioner in Adams Morgan I spent more time working on Voluntary Agreements than almost any other issue and I can see both the positive and negative sides to the agreements. A liquor license is not a right but a privilege and with that privilege should come certain requirements to make sure that businesses are allowed to function and residents are allowed to peacefully exist. If we had better enforcement of the laws and regulations that actually exist, Voluntary agreements would not be the issue that they have become. I fully support legislation that would not only revamp — but not eliminate — the voluntary agreement process, as well as a comprehensive review of all of our alcohol regulations to ensure that they are fulfilling the needs of the residents and the businesses.

14. What are your thoughts on 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 for at-risk populations like homeless youth and transgenders?

GLAA's proposal to legalize prostitution in order to mitigate the problems associated with it is an interesting one and one that someday I could support, however I just do not believe that the District is ready for that yet, especially while we're shackled by our Congressional overlords. In the meantime, the District needs more programs like H.I.P.S. that understand that prostitution is going to happen and therefore provides prostitutes with the skills and resources they need to survive. Even if prostitution is ever legalized, these types of organizations would be essential for the well-being of those who chose to work in the industry. By providing homeless youth and transgenders with housing and career-path job



training we will hopefully be providing them with an alternative path. The various District agencies which provide services in the realm of job-training, placement need to become far more LGBT sensitive and inclusive than they are now, particularly with respect to conducting outreach to the transgendered community who face some of the largest job placement hurdles.

Bryan Weaver Record on LGBT Issues

During my tenure as Chair of the Adams Morgan Advisory Neighborhood Commission, ANC1C twice voted in favor of marriage equality issues. The first unanimous vote was on June 3, 2010 in support of the marriage equality bill before the Council. The second vote (one vote short of unanimous) on September 2, 2009 was in opposition to a proposed ballot initiative. The resolutions were submitted to every member of the Council and Mayor with a cover letter under my signature as Chair.

Following that vote, I wrote the letter below to Errol P. Arthur, then-chair of the D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics. I also sent a copy of this letter to every ANC Commissioner in the city in response to a letter Bob King—the leading opponent of marriage equality—sent to ANC commissioners.

September 10, 2009

Errol P. Arthur, chair
D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 250 North
Washington, D.C. 20002

Chair Arthur and Members of the Board,

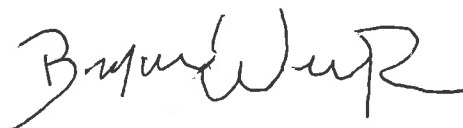
On Wednesday, September 2, at a regularly scheduled meeting, with a quorum being present, the Adams Morgan Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC1C) voted 6 to 1 to oppose a ballot referendum that would define marriage.

Since Bishop Harry Jackson, along with a coalition of pastors and community leaders, filed a ballot initiative last week to define marriage as between one man and one woman — our ANC was left with no other option than to take a stand against this initiative.

I believe that this initiative is a clear violation of the Human Rights Act of the District of Columbia, and as elected officials we are obligated to oppose this endeavor; I cannot support any ballot initiative depriving a protected minority of their rights.

The larger point of this initiative is to exclude our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters from all of the rights, protections and responsibilities that come with a legal, civil marriage. If successful, this will legally and officially degrade them and their families, as it seeks to publicly deny them the basic human right to legally commit to the person they love. In addition it denies them numerous legal and financial protections for their families.

This discrimination is wrong. We cannot keep turning our backs on gay and lesbian Americans.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bryan Weaver". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bryan" and last name "Weaver" clearly distinguishable.

I have spent my entire adult life fighting against discrimination based on culture, race and color — that experience makes it impossible for me not to stand up against discrimination based on sexual orientation. I've heard the reasons for opposing civil marriage for same-sex couples. But when you cut through the distractions and tactics -- they are all about fear. And this fear leads to hatred and intolerance, which too many times has manifested itself in a violent manner. I have seen this for too long in the fight against racism and bigotry.

We have been down this road before in this country. Separate is not equal. The rights to liberty and happiness belong to each of us and on the same terms, without regard to either skin color or sexual orientation.

Our rights as Americans do not depend on the approval of others. Our rights depend on us being Americans.

We're elected not to follow but to lead. We're elected to cast what might sometimes be a difficult, challenging, and politically inexpedient vote.

We're elected to represent our constituents when they're right, and to vote our consciences regardless of whether our constituents are right. And our conscience should be telling us to stand up for civil rights regardless of how unpopular it may appear.

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "A time comes when silence is betrayal." Such a time is now.

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan Weaver

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bryan Weaver". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized "B" and "W".