

GLAA 2014 Candidate Questionnaire

PUBLIC HEALTH

1. Yes. The District's health insurance plans for government employees should serve as a model policy for businesses and individuals purchasing insurance through the District's health exchange. It should be as robust and comprehensive as possible, particularly when the health care required by an individual is as necessary and important as the mental health services, hormone replacement therapy, sex affirmation surgery, and other medical procedures that many of our transgender residents need. We must always seek ways to break down barriers to care and treatment. I will actively support any legislation or administrative changes that ensure that the District's transgender government employees receive the comprehensive response to their health care needs that they deserve.

2. Yes, though, as with all funding initiatives, all program amounts will reflect budgetary conditions. I think the District should always be keen to circumstances where particular populations or demographics are disproportionately affected. We know, for example, that LGBT individuals smoke at a far greater rate than that of the general population. We must ensure that District smoking cessation programs address this sub-population of the general community. We also know from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey that LGBT-identified students are more likely to be depressed, seriously consider suicide, and engage in alcohol or drug use than their straight peers. Again, the District must ensure that any substance abuse, mental health, and other programs available to District residents explicitly target sub-populations at a greater risk. I will support budgets that reflect these needs.

3. Yes, I think the current list is far too narrow and reflects an archaic view of the proper uses of marijuana. That list is certainly at odds with the way we handle and dispense other drugs, including some highly dangerous controlled substances; it reflects culture, not good medicine.

4. Overall, I think the District is performing well in its response to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. However, there is still a long way to go. The recent changes in HAHSTA's revised structure of the Ryan White program has caused concern about implementation and the effect on services. It is critical that the Council perform greater oversight of HAHSTA's transition in this area to ensure that HAHSTA continues to effectively monitor grantees, particularly related to the subcontractor oversight that grantees must now perform. Regarding HIV prevention, I believe the District has generally been excellent. The amount of HIV tests administered by the District grows each year and HAHSTA exceeded its condom distribution target for FY2012 by 28%. I believe HAHSTA's partnership with the George Washington University School of Public Health for HIV/AIDS surveillance must continue to be strong, as the University has dramatically improved data collection about HIV/AIDS in the District. I believe the work of this surveillance staff has been exemplary. However, vacancies have plagued the agency in recent years; thus, a top priority for HAHSTA must be to fill key

positions. Finally, I am eager to see how the merger of the Department of Mental Health and the Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration into the new Department of Behavioral Health affects the availability and effectiveness of substance abuse treatment programs. As a critical component of a comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS, substance abuse programs must be robust, patient-centered, and properly funded.

JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC SAFETY

5. Yes. Statistical reporting remains an area where MPD can and should improve, particularly in making data more accessible to the community. Council oversight of the Department is key to ensuring that MPD collects the necessary data, analyzes it, and uses that data to inform how best to reduce and respond to crime. Regarding transgender-related and other hate crime data, I was pleased to see the District's first report on bias-related crimes in 2009 and the commitment to provide this report annually. However, it is important that members of the community and organizations like Gays and Lesbians Opposing Violence continue to be vigilant by pressing MPD to take its data collection responsibility seriously.

6. I think we need to take a comprehensive look at the criminal justice response to sex work, particularly among youth. Sex trafficking of minors is a particular area where we need to focus less on the criminalization of the children who are exploited through commercial sex and more on how we can direct those children to appropriate social services to improve their lives. In fact, my staff is currently undergoing a comprehensive review of the District's laws and policies on the domestic sex trafficking of children, including looking at ways to ensure that exploited children are routed to social services rather than through the juvenile justice system.

7. Yes. All of our agencies that interact with the community at large should be trained in diversity and cultural competency, not just MPD. For police officers, diversity and cultural competency training should not be limited to only those officers in the Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit. Police Officers interact with the breadth of diversity of our city and must be trained to act appropriately and with respect toward individuals of all communities. Regarding the handling of intimate partner violence, MPD's Domestic Violence Unit should act as the liaison to officers throughout the Department to ensure that all police officers have a minimum amount of training in responding to domestic violence calls. That training should include violence among partners of the same gender. Officers must ensure that victims are safe and be able to refer them to appropriate services—including services geared toward their particular circumstances.

HUMAN RIGHTS

8. As I've stated in previous years, I agree that the Director should be required to have professional training and experience in civil rights law enforcement.

9. I would support the creation of such a project, but I would be careful that we don't impose quotas that create legal difficulties. I firmly believe in old-fashioned—and constitutionally

permissible—affirmative action where the government affirmatively reaches out to marginalized communities, tells them that they are welcome, and encourages their applications. (I do feel, though, that I should point out that the framing of your question isn't quite accurate. DOES doesn't handle government hiring; that is DCHR).

YOUTH AND SENIORS

10. Yes. In fact, I authored the LGBTQ Homeless Youth Reform Amendment Act of 2013, which among other things, requires a minimum number of beds in shelters specifically for LGBTQ youth. I also secured nearly 1 million dollars in the FY 2013 budget to fund shelter beds for LGBTQ youth and for senior permanent supportive housing. I will continue to support organizations like the Wanda Alston House and other that house our youth, and I will work to eliminate homelessness for all, as has been one of my biggest priorities.

CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES

11. No, and I've opposed this in the past. ANCs sometimes have diverging interests from the residents. Only one member of the ANC lives in the affected area, and there could be real quality of life issues raised by licensees. Obviously residents shouldn't have a veto over such licensees, but the affected residents should have a right to be heard. The ABC could conclude that such objections are meritless, but preventing a full airing of concerns isn't the answer.

12. Yes, of course. Adults are constitutionally entitled to choose adult-oriented entertainment. I am committed to maintaining the diversity of entertainment and attractions in the District.

Appendix

- Co-authored the LGBTQ Homeless Youth Reform Amendment Act of 2013, which among other things, would establish a minimum number of beds for LGBTQ youth, would require cultural competency for providers serving LGBTQ youth, and would add the Office of GLBT Affairs to the Interagency Council on Homelessness (This bill was approved on final reading by the Council on February 4; the Mayor is expected to sign).
- Secured nearly \$972,000 in the FY 2013 budget to expand shelter capacity for homeless youth who identify as LGBTQ and for permanent supportive housing for seniors
- Authored the Conversion Therapy for Minors Prohibition Amendment Act of 2013, which would prohibit District-licensed mental health professionals from using practices or therapies designed to change the sexual orientation or gender identity of a minor.
- Co-sponsored the Expedited Partner Therapy Act of 2013, which would allow health care providers to prescribe prescription drugs to the intimate partner of a patient diagnosed with certain sexually transmitted infections without the need for an examination. (This bill was approved on final reading by the Council on February 4; the Mayor is expected to sign).

- Passed legislation requiring insurance companies to pay for HIV/AIDS testing whenever someone comes to a hospital emergency room. At a Health Committee oversight hearing, pressed the Department of Health to see that the law was being implemented.
- Introduced legislation (passed as part of the budget) prohibiting discrimination and harassment against unpaid interns.
- Introduced legislation (passed as part of the Omnibus Public Safety and Justice Amendment Act) adding homelessness as a protected class to the anti-bias crime laws.
- Co-Sponsored the “Hate Crimes Training for Law Enforcement Amendment Act of 2007” and co-introduced the “Sense of the Council in Opposition to Acts of Hate Resolution of 2008”
- Opposed proposed rulemaking that would have removed the protections of the Human Rights Act to persons in custody
- Shepherded the Healthy Schools Act, which among other things, requires public schools, including public charter schools, to provide health education to students. I received the DC Metro TEEN AIDS Advocacy Award for my efforts on the Healthy Schools Act.
- In the 1980s, I spearheaded changes to the George Washington University’s policy of antidiscrimination to include sexual discrimination.
- At GW Law, I participate in special programs (such as welcoming new admittees) aimed at out LGBT Students