

Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, DC 2014 Questionnaire for D.C. Council Candidates

Khalid Pitts Responses

PUBLIC HEALTH

1. Currently I am an Executive Board member of the D.C. Health Exchange and believe and support the District of Columbia providing transgender-inclusive health insurance to all D.C. government employees and more specifically coverage to include sex affirmation surgery. It is imperative that residents of the District have access to proper health care and not have without discriminatory practices. As a member of DC Council, I will continue to fight for this right and use my oversight function to ensure that the current Mayor's executive action is enforced regardless of who elected in November.

2. Yes. Health disparities in the District is a crucial issue and one that I've worked in my career to address. My leadership developing the DC health exchange, and specifically, the ACA ("Obamacare") has had an important impact on targeting and enhancing funding for mental health and substance abuse for these at risk communities. During my time at SEIU, I funded the Economic Policy Institute to study regarding health care disparities for those who identify as LGBT, persons of color, and those living east of the river. It's clear these communities need access to proper treatment plans and essential benefits such mental health and substance abuse treatment. As a city, we should leverage not simply federal funds targeting those in the LGBT community struggling with issues of depression, addiction, and behavioral health but local investments as well.

3. Yes. As a son of a doctor of medicine, it is important that physicians are able to diagnosis their patients with adequate treatment plans that reflect their needs. In addition, I support efforts to continue researching possible qualifying conditions that could be added to the list.

4. One main step that I would take is to have additional hearings and roundtables with community stakeholders who are fighting to improve performance at the HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD, and TB Administration. It is important to work with these stakeholders to find best practices to assist in the prevention and possibly find alternative means for funding. Increasingly, specialized treatments are too costly and out of reach for many DC residents. We continue to advocate and work with insurers and prescription drug companies to develop affordable, accessible treatments.

JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC SAFETY

5. Yes. I share concern that in recent months, the news has reported an influx of crimes towards transgender-related hate crimes. It is important that MPD increases their oversight to gather data related to this crimes and take appropriate steps to deter their re-occurrence.

6. Incarceration is overused against marginalized communities and costly to tax payers. It's important we work collectively as a community to take to scale successful prevention and re-entry programs. As a policy matter, under aged sex workers should be treated as victims of a sex crime and be afforded protective services. Moreover, these adolescents should be funneled into supportive, transitional housing, counseling, and receive mental and medical assistance as required.

Adult sex workers whether transgender and cisgender should be seen with compassion and protected from both workplace retaliation and unnecessary police involvement. These workers should be seen as victims and given a diversion means of aiding them to have greater opportunities. This diversion program should have transitional housing, counseling and mental and medical assistance as with youth who are victims of this act, however provides them with employment opportunities to help sustain and or maintain a better lifestyle.

7. Yes absolutely, a well-trained effective police force is crucial to the growth and values of this city. Whether the victim is cisgender or transgender, the police officers should have inclusive cultural competency training which would aid in handling of intimate partner violence.

HUMAN RIGHTS

8. Yes. It's important for the Director of the Office of Human Rights in civil rights law enforcement. Human right infringement is a civil rights issue and should be handled in the appropriate manner that does not disregard that person who is seeking assistance rights.

9. Yes. The workforce of this city should represent its population. It is imperative that the District has some sort of project with the DOES to increase government hiring from under-represented populations, including the chronically underemployed trans-gender population.

YOUTH AND SENIORS

10. Yes. Additionally funding is necessary to have improved services and treatment for LGBT homeless youth and seniors. When elected to the Council, I plan to work with the Committee on Health and the Committee on Human Services to hold hearings, roundtable discussions, as well as discuss where in the budget we can increase funding.

CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES

11. Yes. As a small business owner that has an ABC license, I understand this process all too well. It is important to have input from the community and is essential in strengthening neighborhoods. I strongly support ANCs and support eliminating license protests filed by citizens. By reforming this process, it would assist business from being stopped from opening and serving their neighbors.

12. Yes. It is every resident's right to choose entertainment that fits their needs.

I am a strong supporter and advocate of the LGBT community. Throughout his tenure at DC Jail, SEIU, US Action, the D.C. Health Exchange, and the owner of Cork, I have been dedicated to ensure the rights and treatment of LGBT community have not had their rights infringed upon or discriminated.

I began working for LGBT rights = at the D.C. Jail. In this role I was responsible for drafting polices at the jail to protect inmates who identified as LGBT against other inmates and possibly even correction officers who could potentially become violent towards them. Soon after I began working with SEIU and aided the union to become one of the first private health plan providers to cover sexual reassignment and domestic partner benefits to LGBT employees, fought for non-discriminatory practices, worked and trained labor unions and staff on Employee Non Discrimination Act, supported and assisted Mary Kay Henry with implementing marriage equality work throughout the Country as well as lead numerous lavender caucus.

My work continued when I was appointed as an Executive Board member to the D.C. Health Exchange board and President of US Action. In both of these positions, I have worked to ensure that regardless of race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation residents are not discriminated against to receive quality health coverage. More specifically, as President of US Action, I aggressively fought to support campaigns for marriage equality, and met with Capital Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce to discuss issues the group is currently facing and strategies to combat issues that face their membership.

In addition to all of this hard work for the LGBT community, I am a small business owner of Cork which has been rated number one wine bar by the Blade Magazine and hosts an event at Cork with the Human Rights Campaign annually.

Please return your signed questionnaire responses by Thursday, September 11 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 to equal@glaa.org. Thank you.