

Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, DC

2014 Questionnaire for D.C. Mayoral Candidates

*Responses from Faith
Mayoral Candidate – DCSGP 2014*

PUBLIC HEALTH

Question #1: Will you act to ensure that the District provides transgender-inclusive health insurance to all D.C. Government employees, to include coverage for sex affirmation surgery (also known as sex reassignment surgery)?

Yes. All human beings have a right to health. I will advocate making public plans, such as DC Alliance and Medicaid, DC government employee plans, and plans offered by the Health Benefits Exchange, provide the full range of trans health treatments (inclusive of psychotherapy, hormone treatments, and surgeries, and anything else included in the current World Professional Association for Transgender Health Standards of Care). In addition, I will encourage employer-based health insurance plans of businesses operating in D.C. to follow WPATH standards.

As stated in “Building on Victory,” the District should model the behavior it expects from others by providing transgender-inclusive health insurance to all D.C. Government employees, to include coverage for sex affirmation surgery (also known as sex reassignment surgery).

Question #2: Will you submit budgets that target funds to address health disparities in the LGBT population, including in mental health and substance abuse treatment?

Yes. As recommended in “Building on Victory,” I will submit budgets that include targeted funds to address health disparities in the LGBT population, including in mental health and substance abuse treatment.

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

Using “Building on victory” as my guide, I will take the following steps:

- Create programs targeting overlooked populations, such as seniors, the deaf and hard of hearing, immigrants and transgender people.
- Encourage the continuation of the Needle Exchange Program, authorized by D.C. Municipal Code 48-1103.01, which helps prevent blood-borne disease without increasing drug use.
- Continue the distribution of condoms and water-based lubricant, which are considered the safest and most effective prevention method for reducing HIV transmission.
- Oppose criminal penalties for HIV transmission, which drive unsafe activity underground, encourage anonymous sex, and increase stigma.
- Regarding mental health, I will submit budgets to increase funding for mental health services and treatment.

JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Question #4: Will you require the Metropolitan Police Department's gathering and analysis of crime statistics to ensure greater comprehensiveness and objectivity, including on LGBT-related hate crimes and intimate partner violence?

Yes. The Metropolitan Police Department's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit (GLLU) needs more and better training and other D.C.-based police forces, prosecutors, investigators, and defenders should also be trained on handling bias-related crimes. As it pertains to intimate partner violence, we must educate first responders and service providers to the unique dynamics of LGBT domestic violence and aggressively advocate for resources to support survivors. The entire MPD force needs to be culturally competent to handle cases of LGBT partner violence.

Question #5: What will you do to provide alternatives to incarceration for marginalized and at-risk populations like homeless youth and transgender people who resort to sex work for survival?

I will encourage and advocate for city government to pursue safer, healthier, and more sustainable alternatives by providing drop-in centers, transitional housing, job training and other educational programs, counseling, addiction recovery programs, mental health services, and STD testing and treatment for at-risk populations.

Question #6: Will you budget funds to hire qualified trainers to provide LGBT-inclusive cultural competency training to all police officers, including in the handling of intimate partner violence?

Yes. I will pursue contracts or grants to obtain qualified trainers. Curricula should be developed through active collaboration between the community and police. The Office of GLBT Affairs should administer the training funds. In addition, the entire MPD force needs to be culturally competent to handle cases of LGBT partner violence.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Question #7: Will you require that anyone you appoint as Director of the Office of Human Rights have professional training and experience in civil rights law enforcement?

Yes. The next director of the Office of Human Rights should have a professional background in human rights law to ensure he or she has the expertise to evaluate staff work and the confidence to stand up to other officials.

Question #8: Will you renew, enforce and update as necessary the Mayoral Order mandating explicit inclusion of every class protected under the D.C. Human Rights Act in all D.C. government agency nondiscrimination statements?

Yes. I will renew, enforce and update as necessary the Mayor's Order to ensure that all District agencies comply with all protected categories under DCHRA.

Question #9: Given the limited results from trans-inclusive Project Empowerment training, will you establish a project at the Department of Employment Services to increase government hiring from under-represented populations, and will you hire trans persons in your own office?

Yes. I will instruct the Department of Employment Services (DOES) to continue to implement and strengthen the Project Empowerment program, which provides job training to transgender people as an important alternative to life on the streets. In addition, transgender individuals will be more than welcome in my office and in my administration.

YOUTH AND SENIORS

Question #10: Will you act to ensure improved services and treatment for LGBT homeless youth and seniors, including expanding transitional housing and emergency shelter space?

Yes, of course. I will mandate that the D.C. government, Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness, and shelter providers enforce LGBT non-discrimination policies in District homeless shelters and transitional housing, and I will provide LGBT sensitivity training to guards as well as staff, to ensure that all shelter clients are protected. I will also expand and increase the availability of transitional housing and emergency shelter space for transgender people, including LGBT homeless youth and seniors.

The District must also increase the supply of affordable housing.

CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES

Question #11: Will you support strengthening Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) reforms by eliminating license protests filed by citizens associations and ad hoc groups, requiring stakeholders to participate in the community process provided by the Advisory Neighborhood Commission?

Yes. I would support the strengthening Alcohol Beverage Control by insisting on fairness, which would require interested stakeholders to participate in an equitable community process. In addition, no license restriction should be permitted absent specific failure to comply with the regulations or in response to demonstrable and measurable harm.

Question #12: Do you pledge to find a suitably located space for The DC Center when the Reeves Center closes?

Yes. I emphatically support the pledge made by Mayor Vincent Gray to find an appropriate and suitably located new space, one that is unquestioningly friendly and welcoming to the LGBT community.

Please list any actions that you have taken that may help illustrate your record on behalf of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people.

Faith/GLAA Personal Statement

As a lifelong performer (starring on Broadway in my late teens, and in film & television roles, thereafter), I have always had professional involvement with artists, which included many members of the LGBT community. A staunch union advocate, I tirelessly pursued equality and access for everyone – without judgment or discrimination.

In addition, I initiated and participated in fundraising activities, often accompanied by my bugle blowing while on horseback. I'm proud to say I was a "fixture" at Gay Pride parades. I have promoted and performed in artists' benefits, appearing on stage at notable venues, including the DC Improv and Mr. Henry's. On each of those important occasions, my outreach was always focused on bolstering the presence and political empowerment of the LGBT community.