

Gay and Lesbian Activist Alliance of Washington, DC
2016 Questionnaire for D.C. Council Candidates

1. I support the Opportunity Scholarship program because it is completely federally funded and provides much needed additional federal funds to our traditional public and charter schools. This program disproportionately assists low income families in giving them a choice to send their children to schools where they will receive a better education in a safer environment. The program provides exactly what it claims to provide – ‘opportunity’. It’s important not just to improve education quality in the District, but to provide families with options for their children. I also contend that the success of many of the charter schools is an argument to expand their availability – not limit it. Finally, I maintain that supporting charter schools and supporting traditional public schools aren’t mutually exclusive, and aren’t at odds with each other. We need all schools to improve, all students to succeed, and all families to have options.
2. I would press the Department of Health to complete and issue the long-delayed LGBT Health Report. LGBT individuals are at a high risk for many health issues and feel a greater impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the District. DC has an extremely high HIV rate of 2.5%, higher than any other state in the country. This rate is even higher among people who identify as LGBT, especially LGBT persons of color. Sources like the LGBT Health Report would give DC a greater insight into the epidemic, how it spreads and what we can do to curb and help people with the disease. This report primarily relies on information the District Department of Health already has access to, and is required for DC to receive important federal grants. It is a shame the DC Council has not pushed harder for this report to be released.
3. We need to make sure our mental health and substance abuse programs are better equipped to address LGBT health disparities. The best way to do this would be to mandate data collection across all agencies to evaluate the stresses and success rate of these programs across all demographic groups. We need to target funds to make sure our mental health and substance abuse programs have enough employees who are familiar

with and equipped to assist the LGBT community. We also need to make sure we do not over-look elderly LGBT people and their unique needs and experiences. Targeting our funding in a data-centered way allows us to make sure our programs are doing the most good with the resources they are given.

4. I do not support separating the Emergency Medical Services from the Fire Department because it would require money that I think would be better used investing in our EMS services. The DC government investing \$7 million in the current EMS by supplementing it with third party providers was a good first step; we need to work further with the department to reduce its response time and to ensure all of its Ambulances are in good repair.
5. I do not support the Death with Dignity Act because it doesn't adequately address end-of-life issues. State endorsed and sponsored suicide opens the door to too much liability on the part of medical institutions, health care facilities, and government. I don't believe this bill appropriately addresses how to determine if a patient is able to give consent. A better solution would be to encourage patients, families, and their doctor to talk about end of life care. No one likes to talk about death, and far too many terminal patients die in the hospital when they could of taken advantage of a far more comfortable and gentle option. Making more people aware of options such as hospice care, we can make a patient's final years and months with their loved ones much better.
6. We need to offer more robust alternatives for marginalized citizens who choose sex work. A vast majority of sex workers turn to sex work out of desperation and the need to support themselves and their loved ones. We need to ensure all sex workers are given the health, educational, and employment resources to make sure they can find safer and legal jobs.

I do not support the legalization of prostitution because I'm not certain that the majority of DC residents agree with its implications. In terms of policy, it has been tied a substantial rise in sex trafficking. However, I am open to the Swedish Model that pushes

the legal burden away from the sex worker making the purchase of sexual services illegal. This would make it much easier to get resources to sex workers, and properly shifts the treatment of sex work as a nuisance towards the treatment of sex work as a form of sexual exploitation that disproportionately negatively affects marginalized groups.

7. This bill is proof that we need to have the Office of Police Complaints and law enforcement agencies need to share more information with each other. It is in everyone's best interest for all of these complaints to be dealt with quickly and truthfully in the most transparent way possible. However, we have to balance the need for law enforcement oversight with the ability of law enforcement to successfully target crime. In the DC Council I would encourage the Office and Police Complaints, our law enforcement agencies, and the community to find a more citizen-first solution for collecting, sharing, and responding to public safety information.
8. We need to support better services and treatment for LGBT homeless youth and seniors. LGBT, especially Transgender, individuals are more likely than almost any other demographic to be homeless. According to the Williams Institute 40% of homeless youth served by agencies identify as LGBT. Homeless persons are more likely to need emergency services which are very expensive and not a good use of resources. By ensuring every individual has shelter we can make sure they have a more consistent and cheaper access to medical care and an easier time obtaining an education or getting a job. This housing first policy has nationally decreased homelessness by over 20% since 2007 and by 30% between 2005 and 2007. It's a proven policy that has a track record of giving people the dignity of housing and the chance to get back on their feet; in the District we must double down on this demonstrated progress.
9. I think appropriately licensed and zoned businesses have the right to provide adult-oriented entertainment to adults. As a legal product, government should provide a transparent and straightforward way for businesses to legally sell and provide it with the proper oversight. Communities should have a say in where new adult businesses go, but should not have the right to shut down pre-existing law-abiding businesses.

10. Community service has always been a large part of my life. I have extensively volunteered in soup kitchens and food banks, and teach ESL classes in computer basics. While I have never worked with any exclusively LGBT groups I think it is every person's responsibility help society's most vulnerable no matter their race, color, ethnicity, sexual identity, or gender identity.