

Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, DC

2016 Questionnaire for D.C. Council Candidates

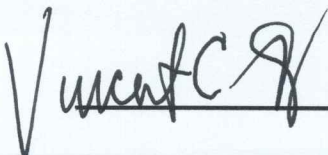
HOME RULE

1. Will you oppose congressionally imposed school vouchers, which have been shown not to improve students' academic achievement, and which often go to schools that operate outside the nondiscrimination provisions of the D.C. Human Rights Act?

I will strongly oppose these vouchers for three reasons: Congress should not have the ability to interfere in the District's business; this program has been shown to be an ineffective way to utilize public dollars; and I do not support this public funding for private schools that do not have to abide by the District's Human Rights Act. As a longtime supporter of Home Rule and a fervent advocate for statehood for the District, it is offensive that the Congress of the United States, which the residents of the District of Columbia have no voting representation in, continues to impose its own programs and policies on our residents. Although this program, known as the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP), is paid for with federal money, its Congressional proponents have recently begun discussing requiring the funding of OSP by local money, which is an affront to the right to self-determination of DC residents. I'm to make great sacrifices to achieve statehood, even participating in civil disobedience and being arrested (which I have done previously), and I will not stand for this type of interference by Congress. Secondly, there has been an independent evaluation of this program by the Institute of Education Sciences which concluded that children who used the program did not improve their academic outcomes, one of the biggest arguments in favor of vouchers. Given that the program is funded with taxpayer money, clearly this is not an effective use of that money. Our right to self-determination should be respected. Thus, those who wish to invest in education should assist us to build the strongest possible public education system including traditional public schools and charters. Finally, I believe that the District's Human Rights Act is a fundamental cornerstone of District law and that discrimination against its protected classes should not be allowed. Period. As Ward 7 Councilmember, I will strongly oppose this program and continue to fight for full legislative autonomy.

HEALTH

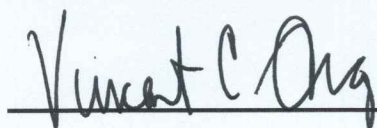
2. Will you press the Department of Health to complete and issue the long-delayed LGBT Health Report, which is supposed to be issued annually?



Yes. The LGBT health report must be issued as soon as possible while also working towards a more inclusive and holistic report which will provide information on the health diversity of the entire LGBT community. A statutory mandate exists to produce an LGBT health report by the Department of Health (DOH) and the Office of LGBTQ Affairs. The report that was issued was not a report regarding the LGBT community but rather was a report on the lesbian, gay and bisexual community: it completely left out the transgender community! This glaring omission was due to the report only analyzing data from the District's participation in the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), a federal survey which did not include a gender identity question, thereby leaving the District without any data on the transgender population.

When I succeeded the Fenty administration I was determined not to repeat this offensive omission and directed DOH and what was then named the Office of GLBT Affairs to develop a plan to rectify this. We not only wanted to issue a report that was inclusive of the entire LGBT community but was also inclusive of youth as well as adults. Although the BRFSS only surveys individuals eighteen and older, the District has rich data on the health needs and risks experienced by lesbian, gay and bisexual youth because of our participation in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The YRBS is also a federal survey that is given to the District's youth in middle and high schools through the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). During my time as Mayor OSSE included a question about gender identity each time the YRBS was administered; however, the question failed to perform well and the data could not be used (unfortunately this was not unique to the District and all states continue still today without a valid gender identity question). Producing another inadequate report was then and remains completely unacceptable; therefore, DOH and GLBT Affairs were able to secure a partnership with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) providing pro bono support to develop and execute a fully inclusive LGBT health survey. We worked very hard to develop the appropriate questions and survey methodology and were in the beginning stages of launching the survey when my administration ended. Although AIR committed to working with the Bowser administration to finish and analyze the survey and produce a report, these plans were apparently abandoned.

Because it's been over five years since any type of report has been issued I will strongly advocate for DOH and the Office of LGBTQ Affairs to analyze and report on the existing data while determining a path forward for a fully inclusive LGBT health report. I must also mention that the Centers for Disease Control, which administers the BRFSS, has recently developed a question on gender identity that other states have used to gather data on the transgender population; however, in 2015 the District did not utilize this question. I will fight to ensure the District includes this question during the next administration of the BRFSS.



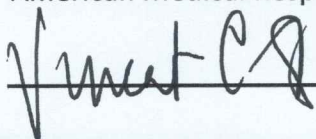
3. Will you support budgets that target funds to address LGBT health disparities, including in mental health and substance abuse treatment, and mandate data collection on this population across all programs?

Addressing health disparities in the LGBT community is extremely important and I will do everything I can to identify and eradicate these disparities. In addition to the health disparities previously mentioned, the LGBT community faces other extreme disparities including high suicide rates, depression, cancer and tobacco and alcohol abuse. Several years ago when the District had one of the highest HIV infection rates in the country, the government committed to reversing that trend by allocating significant financial resources for treatment, testing, free condoms and public education and awareness. We have now seen a great reduction in the District's infection rate largely because of this funding. To reduce LGBT health disparities we must follow the same formula, but first the specific health disparities for District LGBT residents must be identified, which cannot be done without mandatory data collection on sexual orientation and gender identity.

As Mayor I took the first steps to do this by mandating the Department of Human Services and the Department of Behavioral Health to add demographic questions on sexual orientation and gender identity on all intake forms. The District must continue to add these basic yet critically important questions to all relevant agencies including the Department of Health, the Office on Aging, et cetera. Adding these questions is critical, but simply doing so without providing adequate training and support to District employees about why and how to ask these questions is not enough. Under my direction as Mayor, GLBT Affairs trained over 20,000 DC government employees precisely about why this information is so important and the best way to obtain the information. We found that individuals are much more likely to be forthcoming and honest about these sensitive questions if they know this information will not be used to discriminate against them and that it may even help steer them to programs and services specifically designed for their community. Attrition and turn-over require that these efforts must be continued.

4. Will you support separating Emergency Medical Services from the Fire Department?

This is an issue that has been debated for a lengthy time in the District. And there have been passionate arguments on both sides of the issue. Some fervently believed they should be separated while others feel equally strongly that should remain functionally connected. These debates date back more than 20 years when the situation with Tyra Hunter occurred. And of course, we have had the tragic situations that occurred with Daniel Rosenbaum and Medric Cecil Mills. In recent months, the current administration has entered into a contract with American Medical Response private ambulances to handle non-emergent ambulance calls.



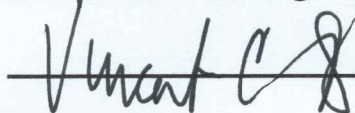
While early assessments have been inconclusive in terms of the effectiveness of this approach, I do think we should provide a sufficient opportunity to evaluate whether this is making a difference. We should gather data on response times and the quality of patient care for comparative purposes. At the same time, we should update our knowledge of how standalone and administratively joined agencies are working nationally. This would permit us to once again ascertain the principal qualities and characteristics that must be in place in order to have a successful EMS function. I suggest that this be done over the next nine months. It would provide the opportunity to have about a year of experience with the American Medical Response approach, hear from a variety of stakeholders on the issue and determine fully what would be required to separate the two agencies if it appears that continued functional connection is infeasible and that residents would be better served by separating Fire and EMS. It also would provide sufficient time to determine what will be required to effectuate a successful separation. It also will bring us close to the FY 18 budget, making it relatively easier to conduct the required financial planning to be incorporated into the budget. Therefore, we will have examined the key factors associated making an informed decision on separation and prepared the way for establishing two agencies, one with a strong medical and healthcare focus. It also would provide the opportunity to ferret out the key functional relationships between a new EMS department and the Department of Health.

JUDICIARY

5. Will you support and press for passage of Bill 21-38, the Death with Dignity Act?

I wholeheartedly will support Councilmember Cheh's Death with Dignity Act if it is not passed by the time I am sworn into office. I've been a strong supporter of an individual's right to self-determination and to decide what to do with their body whether it's regarding rights for people with disabilities or a woman's right to choose what to do with her own body and that same logic compels me to support this measure. Suffering with terminal illnesses, many of which disproportionately impact the LGBT community including AIDS and breast cancer, and facing end of life decisions is incredibly difficult and we should do everything in our power to help with those decisions. With the recent passage of similar legislation in California, there are now six states which permit some type of aid in dying and DC's bill is in keeping with these similar state models. I understand the bill has had a hearing in the Committee on Health but there has been a delay in holding a mark-up. I urge Councilmember Alexander to do that without delay to help those in the District currently suffering with unimaginable pain. If the bill does not pass this session, I will fully support its passage as Councilmember.

6. Will you press for the District to provide "Jobs Not Jails" by developing alternatives to incarceration for marginalized citizens who resort to sex work for survival?



It is my sincere belief that we should invest in people instead of the criminal justice system and I have a strong record of doing just that. I will continue to work to prevent marginalized populations, particularly the transgender community, from entering this system and provide assistance in obtaining jobs. Under my direction as Mayor Metropolitan Police Department Chief Cathy Lanier de-prioritized "sting operations" targeting sex workers because we know conducting these operations not only contributes to more barriers for transgender individuals to gain employment but also makes conditions for these transgender individuals much more dangerous. Every avenue should be explored to divert people away from the criminal justice system for engaging in work to provide for their most basic needs. The vast majority of people who engage in sex work would much rather have the opportunity to work in a job that will earn them a living wage and has much less risk.

In the beginning of my time as Mayor, one of the first meetings I had was with transgender advocates and I was shocked at the rate of unemployment in the transgender community, which the National Transgender Discrimination Survey found was about twice the rate of unemployment in the general population.¹ I immediately directed the Department of Employment Services to develop a program to help transgender individuals obtain job skills and work experience in the hopes of reducing these numbers. Through Project Empowerment, many transgender residents were provided with job training and placed in some of their very first official jobs. In fact, I was proud to hire a graduate of Project Empowerment to serve in my administration, the first out transgender person to my knowledge ever to be hired by a Mayoral administration in the District.

One of the most important things to do in diverting people away from the criminal justice system is to invest resources while they are young to prevent the school-to-prison pipeline. My Mayoral administration took steps to engage at-risk youth and provide them with opportunities before they participated in high-risk behavior or felt as though they had to rely on sex work for survival. For example, under my direction, the Office of the State Superintendent for Education received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control to participate in the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN) Safe Schools Initiative which instructed charter and public school employees on best practices to address incidents of bullying directed at LGBT youth in their schools. Under the grant OSSE also trained school employees on how to develop and implement an LGBT-inclusive curriculum, which has been shown to keep LGBT students engaged in school and reduce incidents of bullying directed at them. A hostile school environment has been one of the reasons many transgender youth drop out of school, which can contribute to many resorting to survival sex, given limited employment opportunities.

Recently I was saddened to learn that the DC Trans Coalition found in its 2015 Needs Assessment that 36% of the transgender population was unemployed compared to just 9% of

the general population.ⁱⁱ These statistics speak to the need for our government to do more to address individual and systemic discrimination and violence to provide the Districts' transgender residents with the education and job opportunities they need to not only support them, but lift them out of poverty.

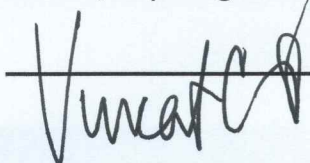
7. Will you support and press for passage of a reintroduced Bill 20-63, the Police Monitoring Enhancement Amendment Act, to give the Office of Police Complaints unfettered access to information and supporting documentation of the covered law enforcement agencies?

The Police Monitoring Enhancement Amendment Act that was proposed in 2013 was a commonsense measure designed to better enable oversight measure that is needed even more so today in light of the recent racially-charged deaths of citizens due to law enforcement officers' actions across the nation. Let me be very clear, the vast majority of law enforcement officers in the District and across the country conduct themselves with integrity and in accordance with their obligations and requirements. I believe this is the reason that no such case has happened in the District, and under Chief Lanier's leadership our police department provides high caliber service to our residents. However, one person's bad actions can ruin the reputation of an entire department and we must remain committed to a robust oversight system that has the necessary authority to investigate complaints filed with the Office of Police Complaints (OPC). In doing so however, I must note that there may be instances where the Metropolitan Police Department is not legally allowed to disclose information to OPC, particularly involving the discipline of officers found to have acted improperly. This is largely due to existing provisions within officers' collective bargaining agreements. I will support and advocate for the passage of legislation that improves OPC's ability to access necessary information to carry out its duties to the greatest extent allowable by federal and local laws and regulations.

YOUTH AND SENIORS

8. Will you support improved services and treatment for LGBT homeless youth and seniors, including transitional housing?

Yes, I have long been an ardent supporter of people who are homeless and will continue to advocate for improved services and treatment for LGBT seniors and homeless youth as Councilmember for Ward 7. As Mayor I was very proud to sign the LGBTQ Homeless Youth Reform Act, a watershed bill for addressing these issues by: requiring the Department of Human Services to count the number of LGBT homeless youth in its annual Point in Time census; requiring service providers to implement best practices for serving the LGBT youth



homeless population; and providing resources for dedicated homeless shelter beds for LGBT youth, among several other important provisions. I was pleased to see Casa Ruby receive a grant to open a homeless shelter for LGBT youth, enabled by this legislation. I have a long record of supporting Casa Ruby and its founder Ruby Corado, who has been an outstanding advocate for the transgender community. It is great that LGBT homeless youth can be served in organizations designed to specifically address their needs; however we must remain committed to ensuring all shelters are welcoming and supportive of LGBT youth and seniors. After receiving several reports of problems accessing shelter while Mayor, I issued a memo to all homeless shelters and transitional housing providers reminding them of their legal obligations to shelter transgender individuals in accordance with their gender identity. My Office of GLBT Affairs trained countless staff at homeless shelters and senior living facilities in the city in order to make them safer, more welcoming environments for LGBT youth and seniors. Moreover, GLBT Affairs staff also personally assisted individuals in filing claims of discrimination with the Office of Human Rights when residents believed they had faced discrimination.

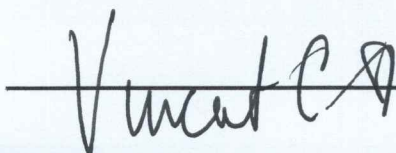
Under my direction, GLBT Affairs also assisted with the Age-Friendly DC Initiative by holding several consultations with groups of LGBT residents to ensure the needs of LGBT seniors were captured and included in the initiative. I was proud to appoint Dr. Imani Woody to the Advisory Committee for my Office of GLBT Affairs. Dr. Woody is a nationally recognized expert on LGBT seniors and founder of Mary's House (located in Ward 7), which will be the first communal housing provider in the District for LGBT seniors. As Councilmember for Ward 7, I will continue my advocacy for improved services for LGBT homeless youth and seniors. It is important that both of these groups have access to world-class social programs in addition to housing to ensure a high quality of life.

CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES

9. Will you defend the right of adults in the District to choose adult-oriented entertainment for themselves, and the right of appropriately licensed and zoned businesses to provide it?

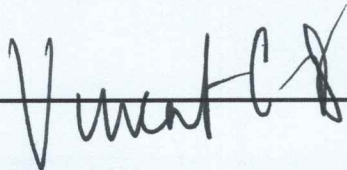
Yes, I support the right of adult-oriented businesses to operate in the District as long as they are appropriately licensed and abide by all other legal requirements. In fact, the DC Eagle, a longtime gay establishment, relocated to Ward 7 while I was serving as Mayor largely without any problems. To my knowledge there hasn't been an increase in crime or any other problems since its relocation and this has largely been the case for other adult-oriented entertainment venues regardless of the sexual orientations of their customers.

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



I will start with some of the most recent actions and work my way backwards:

- As Mayor I reconvened the Office of GLBT Advisory Committee, after it had been dormant for several years to provide robust community input into my office's priorities and programs.
- My Office of Human Rights (OHR) launched the ground-breaking "Transgender Gender Identity Respect Campaign" in 2012. The campaign, a first-of-its-kind in the nation, was designed to: increase understanding of transgender and gender nonconforming people; curtail discrimination and encourage the reporting of discrimination to OHR.
- I established the Bullying Prevention Task Force, which created the Model Bullying Prevention Policy for the District and hired the city's first Bullying Prevention Director. Unfortunately, bullying disproportionately impacts LGBT youth.
- As Mayor, my Department of Insurance, Securities, and Banking (DISB) and Office of GLBT Affairs released a bulletin in March 2013 that prohibited discrimination in health insurance on the basis of gender identity or expression, at the time making DC the fifth state in the country to do this. Prior to the bulletin's release, insurance companies in the District routinely denied insurance to transgender residents and/or denied coverage of routine and other services and procedures to transgender residents.
- I held the District's first-ever Youth LGBTQ Town Hall with the Mayor to learn the concerns of LGBTQ youth first-hand.
- My Office of GLBT Affairs spearheaded the creation of the Violence Prevention and Response Team (VPART), which was comprised of members of the Metropolitan Police Department's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit (as it was called then), and community activists and local organizations. The VPART reviewed all crimes involving LGBT residents, made recommendations on how to improve the investigation and handling of these crimes and provided expertise in developing a new training curriculum for affiliate officers of the Gay & Lesbian Liaison Unit.
- My Department of Corrections (DOC) convened a Transgender Advisory Committee, which met on a quarterly basis to ensure that transgender inmates were treated with dignity and respect. In 2013, DOC's Transgender Advisory Committee updated DOC's "Gender Classification and Housing Policy" and issued "Procedures for Transgender Shaving Services" so that transgender women in particular could continue to shave after

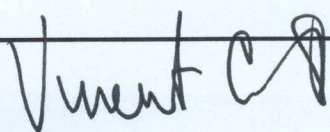


several suicide attempts by inmates with razors, which led DOC to severely restrict their use.

- As Mayor the District joined amicus briefs in the cases of Hollingsworth v. Perry and Windsor v. United States - urging the Supreme Court to strike down laws that banned same-sex marriages and that barred same-sex couples that were legally married from receiving federal benefits.
- I signed into law the "JaParker Deoni Jones Birth Certificate Equality Act of 2013," which allowed individuals undergoing gender transition to have their original birth certificate sealed and to receive a new birth certificate, which accurately reflects their gender identity and name. My Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs and Office of GLBT Affairs provided guidance to the Council on this legislation.
- As Mayor I signed into law the "Marriage Officiant Amendment Act of 2013." This law simplified the process for authorizing a civil celebrant to solemnize a marriage and authorized temporary officiants for the purpose of solemnizing one marriage. Eligible temporary officiants included the Mayor, Council members, and the marrying couples themselves. This removed a barrier for many same-sex couples, who did not want a member of the faith community or the judiciary to solemnize their wedding. I was pleased to become the first public official in the District to make use of this law when I presided over the wedding of a same-sex couple in the Wilson Building.
- As Chairman of the DC Council I supported and presided over the legalization of same-sex marriage in the District.

As Councilmember and Chairman of the District I voted for:

- The Domestic Partnership Equality Amendment Act of 2006 which granted domestic partners similar rights and responsibilities that were held by spousal couples in the areas of spousal support, immunity, inheritance and public assistance.
- The Domestic Partner Health Care Benefits Tax Exemption Act of 2005 which exempted from gross income the employer contribution to health insurance for a domestic partner.
- The Domestic Partnership Property Rights Equity Act of 2006 which granted domestic partners similar rights and responsibilities in the area of property rights that at the time were only held by married individuals



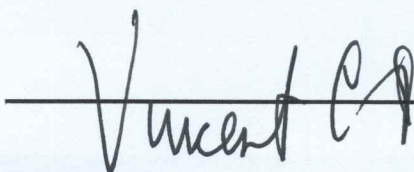
- The Domestic Partnerships Joint Filing Act of 2006 which allowed parties in a domestic partnership to file their DC income taxes jointly
- The Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Amendment Act of 2007 which granted domestic partners standing as god parents and kinship caregivers in order to aid the prevention of child abuse and neglect and dispensed investigations when an adoption petitioner was the domestic partner of the natural parent
- The Domestic Partnership Police and Fire Amendment Act of 2008 which provided domestic partners equity in retirement benefits and amended the Policemen and Firemen's Retirement and Disability Act to include domestic partners as survivors for purposes of police and fire retirements
- The Domestic Partnership Judicial Determination of Parentage Act of 2009 which permitted the domestic partners to be included on a birth certificate as a parent of the child; provided that a child born to parents in a domestic partnership was born in wedlock, and clarified that a child's legitimate relationship to its' parents was not dependent upon the parents being married or in a domestic partnership
- The Office of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs Act of 2005 which created the Mayor's Office of GLBT Affairs to advocate for LGBT District residents within the government
- The Prohibition of Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Expression Amendment Act of 2007 which prohibited discrimination based on gender identity or expression and added this category to the Human Rights Act

Your answers should be typed in a separate document rather than on this form. You must sign your name on each answer sheet to indicate your personal commitment to your answers.

Please return your signed questionnaire responses by Friday, April 29 to GLAA, P.O. Box 75265, Washington, D.C. 20013; or email it as an attachment in PDF format (for loading on GLAA's website) to equal@glaa.org. Thank you.

ⁱ http://www.thetaskforce.org/static_html/downloads/reports/reports/ntds_full.pdf

ⁱⁱ <http://www.dctranscoalition.org/>

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