

2018 GLAA Questionnaire for D.C. Council Candidates

HOUSING

1. Will you encourage the Department of Human Services to conduct monitoring of singles shelters to ensure that LGBTQ applicants are admitted to a shelter that corresponds to their gender identity and do not face discrimination while residing there, as required by law?

Yes. Individuals that find themselves having to seek housing at a shelter are often dealing with a myriad of issues. The District of Columbia, through the Department of Human Services (DHS), should do everything within its power to ensure that discrimination due to gender identity is not one of them. This includes consistent monitoring of shelters and timely investigations of any complaints. If the resources are not available to monitor or investigate as necessary, the Executive and DC Council should make sure the funding for the resources are dedicated and available to DHS.

HEALTH

2. Will you press the Department of Health to work with a community advisory group and allocate necessary resources to ensure the annual completion and issuance of a trans-inclusive LGBT Health Report?

Yes. This report is among the most critical health reports issued in the District of Columbia. Failure to issue this report without it being trans-inclusive is not inline with the District's stated commitment to understanding and addressing the issues facing the LGBTQ community. We must send a strong signal that the city is focused on the needs of everyone in our city. These needs are changing daily and we must remain proactive in addressing them. One of the first critical steps is the LGBT Health Report and it must be completed and issued annually and inclusive.

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

Yes. I support targeted funding for initiatives that address health disparities and other unique needs of the LGBTQ community, including funding for mental health, HIV/AIDS, and substance abuse programs. I co-sponsored legislation such as the "Conversion Therapy for Minors Prohibition Amendment Act" which was passed unanimously by the DC Council. This legislation protects minors from conversion "therapy" a practice proven to have caused depression and other mental health issues. Funding must also be included for the data collection, which is a critical component of any program. Any programs looking to address health disparities must focus on inputs and outputs by using actual data and measurements.

4. Will you support legislation to boost public awareness of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-

exposure prophylaxis (PEP) as options to prevent HIV infections through the distribution of information in health settings in accordance with Department of Health guidelines?

Yes. HIV prevention efforts must start with education and awareness. I will continue to support efforts and initiatives within the Department of Health guidelines to prevent HIV infections. This includes public awareness campaigns as well as condom distribution and education of PrEP and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)

JUDICIARY

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5. Will you support Bill 22-0515, 'Reducing Criminalization to Improve Community Safety and Health Amendment Act of 2017', to improve community safety and health by removing criminal penalties for engaging in commercial sex?

As you know, B22-516 would among other things, require the Mayor to establish a task force to study and make recommendations regarding the provision of supports and the removal of criminal penalties for individuals engaging in commercial sex. Sex trafficking and is a very real problem that poses immediate danger to public safety, health and District residents. I am committed to working with my colleagues to review this legislation. Any bill that the Council supports must pay considerable attention to the impact this legislation would have.

6. What opportunities would you support through legislation to improve the lives of marginalized communities who engage in commercial sex work?

I have authored and the DC Council has passed, L21-259, the "Fair Criminal Record Screening for Housing Act of 2016" which helps residents who have a criminal record for commercial sex work combat housing discrimination. I strongly believe the use of criminal history-based restrictions on access to housing results in the same racial and ethnic disparities in housing that we see in our criminal justice system. We know criminal and arrest records are rarely reviewed on a case-by-case basis and instead used in blanket denials of anyone who may have a blemish on their record.

My staff has also worked on a vacatur statute to provide a means by which victims of trafficking could vacate and expunge convictions for criminal offenses that occurred as a result of being a victim of human trafficking. Sex trafficking victims are often forced to engage in prostitution, but are not always identified as victims. As a result, at-risk populations acquire records that inhibit the ability of these victims to obtain certain jobs or go to school as a result of the stigma. We can help at-risk populations by addressing convictions for prostitution-related offenses for victims of human trafficking.

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?

Yes. I co-sponsored Bill 20-63, the "Police Monitoring Enhancement Amendment Act" when it was originally introduced. I will support and press for its passage and encourage my colleagues on the DC Council to do the same.

8. Will you support legislation to develop an avenue for sealing court-ordered name and/or gender/sex change process?

I understand the importance of an individual's need to have an avenue that allows for sealing court-ordered name and/or gender/sex change process, especially in areas where safety is of concern. I welcome the opportunity to work with GLAA and other organizations to craft legislation that addresses the issues that lead to the need for these type of court orders.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

9. While the unemployment rate in the District is 6.6%, approximately half of transgender people in DC report being unemployed. What steps will you take to address this persisting economic disparity in a timely and sustainable manner?

As the Chair of Business and Economic Development, my staff and I have focused on how to use business and economic development to address many of the issues of the District, specifically unemployment. Our research has focused on the barriers to employment for all demographics in the city including the LGBTQ community. What we have found is that there are several factors that lead to unemployment including hiring bias, job discrimination, wage inequality, lack of explicit legal protections and unequal access to health insurance benefits.

The DC Council has already passed legislation to address some of these issues such as the inability to update identifying documents. I co-introduced, the JaParker Deoni Jones Birth Certificate Equality Amendment Act of 2013 which “requires the Registrar to issue a new certificate of birth designated a new gender for any individual who provides a written request and signed affidavit from a licensed healthcare providers...”

While the DC Council has taken many steps to help address unemployment, specifically for the LGBTQ community, we still have much more room for improvement as the rate of unemployment for transgender people are alarming. I welcome and support policy, legislation and initiatives that address unemployment in the District and will continue to focus my work in the Business and Economic Development committee and throughout the DC Council to do such.

YOUTH

10. Will you support improved services and treatment for homeless LGBTQ youth, including transitional Housing?

As a father of two young daughters, it breaks my heart to see the alarming statistics showing the severely increased risks faced by LGBTQ youth in our city. No child should be forced into a position of homelessness and denied opportunities their peers have.

There is an obvious need for more housing to protect LGBTQ youth and I am willing to work with all stakeholders to provide the services and treatment these youth need. There also needs to be more emphasis and effort placed on educating not only LGBTQ youth, but their peers and families as well to prevent bullying and help foster a more open environment for them to grow and mature in.

Throughout my career both as a civil rights attorney and councilmember, I have made it my priority to fight for equitable rights for everyone. Some of my colleagues and I introduced the Youth Suicide Prevention and School Climate Survey act of 2015 and recognize the importance implementing and fully funding it. I have also co-sponsored the LGBTQ homeless Youth Reform Act of 2013.

SENIORS

11. Will you support improved services and treatment for LGBTQ seniors, including affirming senior Housing?

Seniors have faced a lifetime of systemic inequality which is being exacerbated by the rapid changes in our city. Focusing on improved services for seniors and addressing housing insecurity is a long-standing

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commitment of mine. I continue to commit Ward 5 constituent service funds to support meals and basic need fulfillment for seniors, including LGBTQ seniors. Additionally, accessible and supportive housing reduces the social isolation experienced at higher rates by the aging LGBTQ population, and I will continue to advance legislation that targets housing insecurity. Improved sensitivity and cultural competency training for city employees is another area in which the District can commit resources to ensuring respectful interactions with traditionally marginalized populations.

My goals will always focus on making sure that seniors are able to age in place and live their lives with dignity, but I also wanted to make sure that seniors were able to live their lives with comfort on how they will be recognized once they passed on. That is why I authored and introduced the **Death Certificate Gender Identity Recognition Amendment Act of 2016** [B21-0444].

This bill allows an individual's gender identity to be properly reflected on their death certificate. The current process records an individual's "sex" as it is reported to the Vital Records Division of the Department of Health, but there is no procedure to alert officials that the individual's gender identity differs from what was reported. Currently, only one state – California – has passed a law explicitly requiring that death certificates reflect an individual's gender identity. The bill will provide dignity to all District residents in the event of their death.

Following the vote, I remarked that this bill means that District residents who pass away will be able to have their identities appropriately reflected on their death certificates. First and foremost, we are honoring their wishes.

12. LGBT seniors are more likely to age alone, and face higher levels of economic insecurity and discrimination than non-LGBT seniors. Will you support funding for congregate meals and other services that specifically aim to keep LGBT seniors engaged in the community?

Social isolation affects many LGBT older people around the country as they deal with stigma and discrimination in their daily lives and in our country's aging system. The primary risk factors for social isolation affect LGBT older adults in unique and disproportionate ways. For example, one primary risk factor is living alone. LGBT older people are twice as likely to live alone, twice as likely to be single, and 3-4 times less likely to have children—and many are estranged from their biological families.

Many mainstream aging providers do not account for the unique realities and needs of LGBT older adults, leaving them at risk for isolation, neglect and discrimination. A recent national survey of LGBT older adults in long-term care facilities found that only 22% of respondents felt they could be open about their LGBT identities with facility staff, 89% predicted that staff would discriminate based on their sexual orientations and/or gender identities, and 43% reported instances of mistreatment.

LGBT-inclusive aging services help offset these problems by providing spaces for LGBT elders to find community and support—but they are sparse and underfunded. A 2010 nationwide survey of 320 area and state units on aging found that less than 8 percent offered services targeted to LGBT older adults and only 12 percent reported outreach efforts to this population.

CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES

13. To fight the District's notorious 'pay-to-play' reputation, will you support enacting legislation that combines the best elements of Bills 22-8, 22-47, and 22-51?

As Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, I was responsible for legislation and oversight related to elections; campaign finance; general services; personnel, including employee; maintenance of

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public buildings; property management, including the declaration of government property no longer required for public purposes; grants management; and matters relating to the general operation and services of the government. In this role, I was committed to weeding out bad actors and instituting an efficient and streamlined process to campaign reform and good government. Some of my legislative accomplishments include:

Passage of the Campaign Finance Reform and Transparency Amendment Act - As author of this legislation, I sought to institute a comprehensive campaign finance reform bill that would close the LLC loophole, increase transparency and reporting by campaigns and lobbyist, limit money order contributions and increase penalties and fines for campaign finance violations.

Passage of the Campaign Finance Training Amendment Act - which expanded the authority of the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability to issue advisory opinions as well as to expand the range of penalties that the Board may impose.

Passage of the Campaign Finance Training Amendment Act - which established a mandatory training program within the Office of Campaign Finance to educate candidates for public office and the treasurers of political committees regarding campaign finance requirements. Participants would then be issued a “Certificate of Completion,” verified by oath or affirmation, that would then be publicly posted on OCF’s website.

While I am proud of my work during my tenure as Chair of Government Operations, I understand there remains work to be done. The intent of bills 22-8, 22-47, and 22-51 aim to address real issues of concern. I am committed to working with my Council colleagues to review and put forth the best bill ensures transparent and equitable elections in the District.

14. What steps will you take to ensure a transparent and equitable bidding process for city contracts?

Since my arrival to the Council, I have championed the cause of District-based small businesses. In my role as Chairman on the Committee on Business and Economic Development, one of my priorities is to ensure District-based businesses, in particular, Small Businesses Enterprises (SBEs) have access to a transparent and equitable contracting and procurement process.

I always talk about the “Four Cs:” Compliance, Capital, Contracts and Capacity. After hearing from the small business community and stakeholders on how to improve doing business in the District, I introduced and passed a bill that gets at the heart of transparency and equity in contracting.

The “Accessible and Transparent Procurement Amendment Act of 2018” combines the best elements of the “Quick Payment Amendment Act of 2017” and the “Government-Subcontractor Dispute Resolution Amendment Act of 2017.” This legislation creates a single web page to link all District government contracting opportunities, bring vendor invoicing payments online, and ease dispute resolution between prime and subcontractors.

While this legislation represents a monumental step forward, there remains important steps that must be taken to further improve the contracting process. One of those steps I am focused on is identifying how District agencies craft solicitations. The Committee has provided significant oversight on improving the Department of Small and Local Business Development’s (DSLBD) waiver process. Now, the Committee is focused on ensuring that OCP and DSLBD coordinate to review the process for creating and issuing solicitations. During the oversight process, I heard from many witnesses who spoke to untrained staff, solicitations riddled with barriers for equitable competition, and to concerns about how contracts are

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bundled together. I am committed to working with OCP, DSLBD and the small business community in further reviewing and evaluating the solicitation process to find a solution that addresses these concerns.

DSLBD also manages the District's Certified Business Enterprise (CBE) Program. The CBE program provides eligible businesses a maximum preference of twelve points or a reduction in price of more than twelve percent on bids and proposals. As Chair, I will continue to provide oversight over this critical program. This includes ensuring the agency is proactively going after bad actors and utilizing the full force of the law to assess penalties and fines for the breach of certain requirements.

Finally, For FY18, DSLBD has instituted a special initiative to conduct a comprehensive review of how preference points and percentages of price reduction is applied during District procurements. The purpose of this FY18 strategic project will be to review how all contracting entities within the District apply the preference points and percentage of price reductions for CBEs during the procurement process. This issue has been raised within the CBE community and there has been no clear explanation on how it is applied across the board. The end goal is to propose new rulemaking to provide guidance on how the preference should be applied when evaluating bids and proposals.

Your record is part of your rating. Please list any actions that you have taken that may help illustrate your record on behalf of LGBTQ people.

During my tenure on the DC Council, my record reflects my commitment to championing the issues and improving the quality of life for all residents. This includes my continuing focus on LGBTQ issues. I have made sure to recognize the community through recognitions such as LGBT Equality Day Recognition resolutions as well as honor and grieve with the community when unfortunate acts of violence impact all of us. Without hesitation, I introduced the June 12th Orlando Victims of Gun Violence Remembrance and Recognition Resolution of 2016 which honored those individuals who lost their lives in the mass shooting in the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

Recognizing and remembering is always important, but I also have a legislative record that addresses the issues facing the LGBTQ community as well as eliminating some of the hurdles and dangers they face.

I heard from many LGBTQ residents who had concerns about having children in the District. I worked with advocates and authored the Collaborative Reproduction Amendment Act of 2016 [B21-0016]. This bill represents a recognition that the District's current law criminalizing surrogacy agreements is out of step with the diverse ways that District residents have and will continue to form families. The bill adopts best practices and model provisions from other states to anticipate many of the issues that could arise during a surrogacy, including strong legal protections for both surrogates and parents. Only four states in the country ban the practice of surrogacy, and the District is the only jurisdiction with criminal penalties.

It is long past time that the District join the vast majority of states in allowing surrogacy agreements. This law protects all parties and ensures that District residents won't have to travel to another jurisdiction to enter into a surrogacy agreement. I have heard from many District residents who have used surrogates in other states and the surrogates themselves, and they all would have wanted the protections that this bill provides."

It is worth noting that I have always publicly supported marriage equality as a candidate and a Councilmember. I am a member of the Human Rights Campaign and Gertrude Stein Democratic Club. As a former trial attorney for the Civil Rights Division of the US Department of Justice, I investigated

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nursing homes, prisons, jails and juvenile justice facilities around the country to ensure that the conditions meet the standards required by our Constitution. One of the most important issues we faced at the DOJ was protecting inmates from harm, particularly LGBT inmates who were being sexually assaulted. These attacks underscore the importance of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) enforcement across the country.

As a former advisor to the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, I worked with the Mayor's Office of GLBT Affairs, MPD, and GLOV to address the violent attacks against transgender residents. I also worked with the Office of GLBT Affairs and MPD to coordinate the One City Summer Fun in summer 2011, which was focused on providing our youth, particularly members of the LGBT community, with constructive activities and events happening around the city rather than congregating in Gallery Place.

Each campaign I have run, and indeed my current Council staff, represents all of Ward 5, including staff members and core volunteers from the LGBT community. As a member of the Council, I have developed a strong voting record in support of the LGBTQ community. My office worked closely with the DC Trans Coalition on drafting and negotiating the Deoni Jones Birth Certificate Equality Amendment Act of 2013, which went into effect a few months ago, making it much easier for transgender residents to obtain a new birth certificate reflecting the appropriate gender. The law also makes it less burdensome to change one's legal name. I am pleased to have had the opportunity to so positively contribute to the lives of DC's trans community, and I look forward to future opportunities to work together.

Among other bills in which GLAA may have an interest, I co-sponsored the LGBTQ Homeless Youth Reform Act of 2013 (and 2012), voted in favor of the Marriage Officiant Amendment Act of 2013. I also co-sponsored and actively support the passage of the "Conversion Therapy for Minors Prohibition Amendment Act of 2013."

As you may know, as the former Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, my committee had oversight over the Office of GLBT Affairs and the Advisory Committee to the Office of GLBT Affairs. I worked with GLAA as I exercised my oversight responsibilities over these offices and in my legislative capacity on the Council. I was honored to work side-by-side with members of the LGBTQ community to ensure that all of our residents' concerns are voiced and represented. While I am no longer on that committee, please know that you have my commitment to continue to partner with GLAAD and the LGBTQ community.

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, May 4, 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.

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