

2018 GLAA Questionnaire for D.C. Council Candidates

At-Large Councilmember Anita Bonds, Incumbent
May 4, 2018

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. I serve on the Interagency Council for Homelessness (ICH) and will remain vigilant in reminding the ICH, Department of General Services (DGS), and DC Department of Human Services (DHS) that they must adhere to all applicable laws, specifically the Human Rights Act which includes gender identity as a protected class and admit our homeless residents to a safe space that corresponds to their gender identity. I will not only encourage but will write a letter or host a meeting between GLAA, interested allies and Director Laura Zeilinger and the DHS to set in place guidelines and procedures that will educate, monitor and record incidents of discrimination.

Additionally, I believe we must also include discussions with the Director of our Protective Services Division (PSD). The PSD is responsible for maintaining order and providing police and security services at our shelters. These District government employees are often the front-line staff that witness such incidents of harassment and discrimination.

Finally, I want to affirm my belief in the right of an individual to identify or to remain gender neutral. I fully support the implementation of such legislative measures. Gender is a spectrum and some of our residents identify and some do not identify as male or female. It is important to have the options. I fully supported and voted in favor of Bill 21-0444 - Death Certificate Gender Identity Recognition Amendment Act of 2015 and sponsored Bill 22-0331 - Nonbinary Identification Cards Amendment Act of 2017.



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?

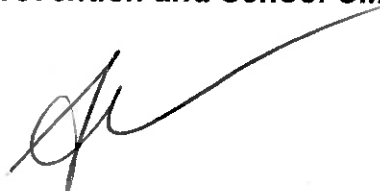
I have shared my disappointment concerning the DC Department of Health being negligent in their statutory requirement to produce a timely annual report on LGBTQ health disparities in the District of Columbia when I held oversight of the Office of LGBTQ Affairs. Due to DOH's failure to complete timely, accurate and all-inclusive reports, I have co-introduced along with Councilmember Grosso, Bill B21-0804 - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Health Disparities Documentation Act of 2016. This will help ensure that the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Study (BRFSS) will include Trans inclusive questions pertaining to sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex at birth which will be used in the annual LGBTQ Health report.

Yes. I will publicly encourage the Department of Health and the Office of LGBTQ Affairs to continue the LGBT Data Working Group to highlight best practices, to improve data collection, Trans participation, determine needs, and other factors that will improve the overall health of the LGBTQ community.

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. that is why the study above is so critical. For years, statistics have shown that those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) often face social stigma, discrimination, and other challenges not encountered by people who identify as heterosexual. They also face a greater risk of harassment and violence. As a result of discrimination and other stressors, LGBT persons have been associated with higher rates of psychiatric disorders, depression, substance abuse, and suicide. Dedicated funding and the collection of data is needed to target the diverse communities within the LGBTQ community to provide affirming support in safe and welcoming spaces. Especially, spaces and support to prevent youth suicide. I agree with GLAA's Building on Victory guide of the, "dire need for greater availability of free and low-barrier mental health services for young people in the District," and believe the DC Department of Behavioral Health must play a greater role in assisting with those goals.

Additionally, I have co-sponsored Bill B20-0501 – Conversion Therapy for Minors Prohibition Amendment Act of 2013, which protects children and youth from unproven practices that end up causing great harm and mental health issues and co-introduced Bill 21-0361 Youth Suicide Prevention and School Climate Survey of 2015.



4. Will you support legislation to boost public awareness of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) as options to prevent HIV infection through the distribution of information in health settings in accordance with Department of Health guidelines?

Yes. Definitely. I will support legislation and support a public campaign. I was involved in the early days of DC government's response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and am comforted knowing that we were able to make great strides in raising awareness, education, and treatment options for all communities. Many friends eventually succumbed but through advanced treatments and retroviral drugs, a once death sentence became a chronic illness.

Today, PrEP and PEP moves us closer to eradicating the transmission of the disease and is being embraced increasingly by educated Caucasian males while African American men and women, Hispanics, Transgender women, seniors, and other marginalized communities at risk are not utilizing the treatment.

In my first year on the council, I had the DC Department of Corrections launch a voluntary pilot program to test for HIV/STD's to determine the rate of transmission between men who have sex with men during incarceration. I will meet with the Director to inquire of Corrections policy as it relates to PrEP and PEP and will use my advocacy as a Member of the Council to spread awareness across all communities especially, among seniors and women of color.

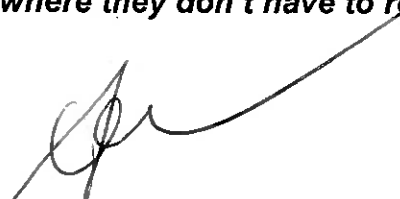
JUDICIARY

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?

Yes. I believe that we should decriminalize against those engaged in commercial sex work similar to how the council and I voted to decriminalize marijuana possession and cultivation. However, I want to be ensured that the bill's provisions are strong enough to prohibit and punish the act of human trafficking and sexual slavery. I do not support red light districts but have no objection to commercial sex work between consenting adults.

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

I believe we need greater outreach to these communities and to expand programs. The city needs to work with community and non-profit organizations to provide one stop centers with wrap around services including, health and mental health care, transitional housing, addiction recovery programs, and educational programs to provide greater opportunities where they don't have to resort to sex work.



I welcome joining with community advocates to legislative ideas and programs that can be implemented to uplift and benefits their lives.

7. What opportunities would you support through legislation to improve the lives of marginalized citizens who resort to sex work for survival? Job place skills building

Many engage in commercial sex work as a means of survival and end up with an arrest record. I sponsored and voted in support of DC's Ban the Box law to allow those with a criminal conviction a level playing field when applying for employment.

These individuals need to be treated in fair and decent manner and we need to continue to engage our GLLU unit, MPD and law enforcement agencies need to share data and work with community to protect their civil liberties.

8. 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 have held several meetings with the Director of the Office of Police Complaints, I am a co-sponsor of Bill 20-63, the Police Monitoring Enhancement Amendment Act and will support and/or re-introduce if needed. The Office of Police Complaints (OPC) has improved greatly these past years with enhanced personnel, greater resources and most importantly, the significant reduction of the back log of complaints and being the sole independent authority responsible for processing all MPD complaints. This was achieved by the council proving increased funding and personnel as requested by GLAA and other like-minded organizations.

District residents deserve a well-functioning OPC to allow for a transparent resolution process of mediating complaints with police. My support of the body-worn camera program helps the OPC adjudicate the cases in a fair, accurate, and timely manner. Additionally, my support for the Neighborhood Engagement Achieves Results (NEAR) Act will help create community focused crime preventive measures, especially in communities most affected by lethal violence, poverty and unemployment.

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

Yes. As a sponsor voting in favor of the JaParker Deoni Jones Birth Certificate Equality Amendment Act, the Nonbinary Identification Cards Amendment Act, and the Death Certificate Gender Identity Recognition Amendment Act of 2015, I remain willing to work with my colleagues and stakeholders to implement the passage of legislation that would permanently seal a Court ordered name change.

10. 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?

I would emulate and expand the ground-breaking program that Mayor Vincent C. Gray implemented. The "Transgender and Gender Identity Respect Campaign." This campaign has been successful in highlighting workplace discrimination against transgender and gender non-conforming people by changing employer's attitudes and fears. I would implement specific job training programs outreach and recruitment of Transgender and gender non-conforming residents through our DC Department of Employment Services and offer them job training programs in a variety of fields to help them obtain quality training needed and full employment opportunities.


Additionally, I would work to connect advocates like Casa Ruby, DC Trans Coalition, H.I.P.S., GLAA, and allies with the private sector such as the DC Chamber, the Greater Washington Hispanic Chamber, the Minority Contractors and others to facilitate ongoing dialog that can produce alliances for employment opportunities for unemployed Transgender residents.

YOUTH

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

Yes. I co-sponsored Bill B20-0051 The LGBTQ Youth Homeless Reform Act of 2013 which provided increased resources, safe affirming spaces, and increased housing spots for our LGBTQ youth. SMYAL, the Wanda Alston House and Casa Ruby have greatly expanded their services from the implementation of this law.

LGBTQ Youth face great challenges and I remain committed to increased services and housing options for them.

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SENIORS

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

Yes. Through my leadership as Chair of the Housing Committee, which holds oversight of the DC Office on Aging, I worked with the DCOA and Ron Swanda of the Senior Advisory Council to include LGBTQ issues within the Age Friendly DC plan. The Committee has increased the DC Office on Aging budget to \$47 million for Fiscal year 2019. This will greatly increase services and expand our wellness centers and senior villages.

In last years budget, I created a program which is administered by the Office of LGBTQ Affairs that provides permanent housing vouchers for LGBTQ seniors 62 and older. We will continue this program in 2019.

Additionally, we included increased funds for the Safe at Home Campaign which provides grants for seniors to repair and modify their homes to be handicapped assessable allowing them mobility and to age in place with dignity and grace.

13. 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?

Yes. I have joined the D.C. Center in advocating for a congregant meal program specifically targeted towards LGBTQ seniors for the past two years and have had numerous conversations and meetings with the Director of the Office on Aging to implement such a program. I am pleased to announce that the meal program will begin in the Summer of 2018 and will extend into 2019 through funding within the Committee on Housing and Neighborhood Engagement budget, which we marked up on May 2, 2018.

Last year, I appropriated targeted funding to expand Senior Villages which created a Southwest and Anacostia Senior Village allowing many low income seniors opportunities to share resources and have greater engagement within their community.

Additionally, with my approval, the FY 2019 budget increases transportation options for home bound seniors.

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CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES

14. 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?

Yes. I fully supported and voted in favor of the DC Fair Elections laws that reduces the perception of pay to play by establishing a small donor empowerment program for D.C. elections along with my support for Ethics Reform.

I believe that we must have complete transparency on the contribution and expenditure of our campaign system.

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

As Chair of the Committee and Neighborhood Development, I have worked with Polly Donaldson, Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, of which I hold oversight responsibilities, to implement an online payment tracking system accessible to the public. This is a customized invoice tracking system that provides greater transparency to their award process. I believe that all agencies that award contracts and grants should have similar portals.

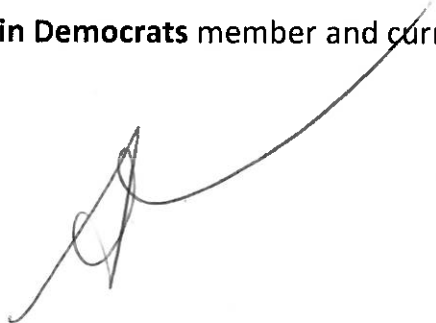
Your record is part of your rating. Please list any actions that you have taken that may help

As a community activist and as an elected official, Councilmember Anita Bonds has a 100% voting record in advancing LGBTQ rights.

ANITA ON LGBTQ RIGHTS

- Strong believer in equality for LGBTQ individuals and their families for 40 years.
- Picketed against the Briggs Amendment which wanted to fire gay teachers, early supporter for LGBTQ officials in the 1st Barry Administration and have supported the advancement all the way to Marriage Equality today.
- In fact, was proud to officiate the marriage of a great gay couple who have now been married for over two years.
- Of course, many know her as a long time **Stein Democrats** member and current DC Democratic Party Chair.

RECENT ACTIONS ON THE COUNCIL



- Former oversight Chair of the Office of LGBTQ Affairs where she shepherded the addition of the Q to LGBTQ.
- Funded for the first time ever, vouchers for low income LGBT seniors. Looking to expand this year.
- Worked w DC Department of Human Services to ensure increased funds were provided to more beds for homeless LGBT Youth.
- Worked w Office on Aging to provide funding for Mary's House and awarded Dr. Imani Woody and many other LGBTQ individuals and organizations with Community Cornerstones Awards.
- Currently working on how best to open a LGBTQ Senior Retirement Home in the District.
- Met with DC Corrections to establish an STD/HIV awareness and detection program.
- Worked with Ron Swanda to include LGBTQ issues and programs into the Age Friendly DC initiative.

DEMOCRATIC VALUES

- Voted for the \$15/hr. Minimum Wage Increase.
- Funded over \$300 Million for Affordable Housing Initiatives creating nearly 6,000 affordable units.
- Expanded the Local Rent Subsidy Program/Increased Home Purchase Assistance from 50K to 80K/
First to fund repair of Public Housing units/ Increased funds for legal help at Office of Tenant Advocate.
- Voted for DC Family Paid Leave Law.
- Voted for Sweeping Ethics Reform and DC Fair Elections Laws.
- Passed law that caps rental late fees down to 5%, /Passed TOPA reform to increase rental availability.
- Passed law that protects seniors, children and those with disabilities from financial abuse.
- Passed law that exempts taxes on diapers and feminine hygiene products.
- Passed law that Bans the Box on returning citizens employment applications

