



May 1, 2018


Guillaume Bagal  
1700 Kalorama Road, NW  
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Guillaume,

Please find attached my responses to the 2018 GLAA Questionnaire. GLAA continues to fight for the legal protections of our LGBTQ community, a fight that I have been proud to support. GLAA's endorsement would mean a great deal to me as I seek re-election to be mayor of my hometown, Washington, DC for another four years.

If you should have additional questions, please feel free to contact my campaign at 202-841-2928.

Thank you,



Muriel Bowser

## HOUSING

1. Will you direct 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. Under my leadership and despite the federal government's reversal of their guidance on this issue, the Department of Human Services has continued to monitor 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. If given the opportunity to serve for a second term as mayor, I would continue this practice.**

## HEALTH

2. Will you direct 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. Under my leadership, we have worked to complete this report and will look to continue to find ways to collect and analyze health trends to ensure we are addressing LGBTQ health disparities.**

3. Will you submit 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.**

4. Will you support and sign 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. Under my leadership, we have launched an aggressive, nationally-recognized campaign for PrEP focusing on the target populations most impacted in DC. I'm proud of the work of my health team to continue to find the most effective ways to raise public awareness for PrEP.**

## JUDICIARY

5. Will you support and sign 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?

**The issue of commercial sex, sex trafficking, and prostitution in general is highly complicated, generates a lot of emotional responses, and requires careful consideration. While the bill to decriminalize prostitution has not been scheduled for a Council hearing, I would support alternatives to incarceration for individuals arrested for soliciting or engaging in sex work. Several other cities have created arrest diversion programs for sex workers that focuses on their personal needs, such as housing, mental and behavioral health treatments, addiction services, and stable employment. Some cities also offer diversion programs to customers that focuses on health, sex education, and learning about exploitation of sex workers. These are options that merit consideration for the District. But we must ensure a citywide conversation that engages sex workers, advocates, health experts, human trafficking experts, and our residents. We must also continue to work together to identify and prosecute anyone that is engaged in human trafficking or forcing individuals – especially minors – to engage in sex work without their consent.**

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

**Our marginalized communities need safe and stable housing, greater economic opportunities, pathways to pursuing education, including vocational training, and access to health providers, particularly for addictions and mental and behavioral health needs. Our marginalized and at-risk residents also need to feel safe in their neighborhoods, which many do not because they simply do not trust law enforcement. While I would support legislation that focuses on these critical needs, we also must ensure that existing laws, agency programs, nonprofit organizations, and community grants are functioning properly. We must hold our agencies – and ourselves – fully accountable by critically and regularly reviewing existing programs, initiatives, and responsibilities. If our marginalized communities are being targeted for violence or discrimination, then we must redouble our efforts at ensuring their safety and rights are being properly protected. I would be honored to have another four years in office to do just that.**

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

**As with marginalized communities engaging in commercial sex, we need to help anyone engaged in survival sex work with better, safer options. We first need to identify those individuals and, rather than sending them into the criminal justice system, diverting them to programs that can determine the individuals' needs – whether it is stable housing, addiction treatment, or health services. But our work with these individuals must go beyond a few meetings; it must be a sustained effort that includes regular follow up and**

**needs assessments. No one should be forced into sex work because he or she believes they have no other options for meeting their economic needs. Jail time is not the right answer for these situations; compassion and treatment is a better option for the individual and for the city as a whole.**

8. Will you support and sign 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?

**I support an independent Office of Police Complaints to ensure just, unbiased, and timely investigation of any complaints of misconduct or unprofessionalism committed by officers of the Metropolitan Police Department and D.C. Housing Authority. The substance of Bill 20-63 is already part of D.C. law as a result of Section 208 of the Neighborhood Engagement Achieves Results Amendment Act of 2016, D.C. Law 21-125, more commonly known as the NEAR Act. I signed the NEAR Act into law and this provision to expand the authority of the Office of Police Complaints went into effect in 2016. As a result, OPC produced its first detailed analysis of use of force by MPD officers, including age, years of service, and demographic information about officers, as well as demographic information about the individuals alleging the misconduct. I support the work done by the Office of Police Complaints and believe it serves a critical role in ensuring accountability and transparency.**

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

**I would like to work with GLAA to understand more about this process.**

## HUMAN RIGHTS

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?

**Since 2015, my Administration has worked tirelessly to successfully drive down unemployment in all eight wards with the most significant declines in our city's hardest hit wards east of the river. Unemployment across the city is now 5.8% and has reached the lowest recorded levels in wards 7 and 8 ever recorded. This could not have been accomplished without significantly improving the District's workforce system, creating targeted training and employment programs, leveraging the District Government as an employer, and partnering better with business to ensure that training offerings and the needs of business were aligned.**

**Even with all the progress and innovation, there are some communities that continue to be disparately impacted by unemployment, in particular, our transgender neighbors. I have a strong record of expanding policies and programs to support the transgender community and have been proud to carry that commitment and those values forward as I have worked**

**to tackle unemployment as your Mayor.**

**In November of 2015, the DC Office on Human Rights conducted the very first government-run testing project in the nation to analyze how employers respond to resumes from applicants perceived as transgender compared with resumes of applicants perceived as cisgender.**

**This report outlined several key findings:**

- 48 percent of employers appeared to prefer at least one less-qualified applicant perceived as cisgender over a more-qualified applicant perceived as transgender.**
- 33 percent of employers offered interviews to one or more less-qualified applicant(s) perceived as cisgender while not offering an interview to at least one of the more-qualified applicant(s) perceived as transgender.**
- The applicant perceived as a transgender man with work experience at a transgender advocacy organization experienced the highest individual rate of discrimination.**
- The restaurant industry had the highest percentage of responses perceived as discriminatory among the employment sectors tested, although the sample numbers are low and therefore not conclusive.**

**Appropriately, the DC Office of Human Rights pursued enforcement actions against those employers identified through the study and continues to actively investigate complaints against employers when discrimination against transgender Washingtonians occurs.**

**In 2016, my Administration partnered with the National LGBTQ Task Force to publish a first-of-its-kind resource to help eliminate workplace discrimination against transgender and gender non-conforming people. The guide, titled “Valuing Transgender Applicants and Employees,” provides in-depth best practices intended to help employers across the nation create a genuinely inclusive and welcoming workplace environment for transgender people.**

**Further, while Project Empowerment is not a new tool in the cities toolbox, the team I put together has worked incredibly hard to strengthen the program to ensure that transgender residents are able to secure sustainable employment. We have numerous success stories and have leveraged those successful participants to recruit and support additional transgender residents as they pursue good paying jobs.**

**When I took office in 2015, the District had the worst workforce system in the nation. The U.S. Department of Labor had no confidence in our system designating our system as a high-risk grantee. Young people were under-enrolled in programs, the largest workforce agency was wildly under spending its local and federal dollars – while significant need persisted, and communities hardest hit by unemployment were not being adequately**

**served. Because of the hard work of my team, there is a new narrative. And, while there still remains much more work to do, we have made substantial progress – and the transgender community remains a top priority for me as we tackle unemployment and get DC residents to work.**

## YOUTH

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

**Yes. In the summer of 2015, DHS and the Community Partnership conducted the first Homeless Youth Census (HYC). HYC counted 330 homeless youth and 215 housing insecure youth. Of the 330 homeless youth, 43% self-identified as LGBTQ. As a result, we expanded the availability of LGBTQ homeless youth beds and accompanying services to help move toward greater self-sufficiency. In FY17, we allocated an additional \$2.3 million in funds to specifically support additional shelter, transitional housing beds, and homeless prevention services. If re-elected, I am committed to making homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring for all.**

## SENIORS

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

**Yes. Since taking office in 2015, I have launched a number of innovative initiatives as a part of Age-Friendly DC - a coordinated, comprehensive, and collective-action effort whose goal is to ensure that all DC residents are active, connected, healthy, engaged and happy in their environment. In addition to expanding the number of assistance housing vouchers for LGBTQ seniors, I have invested \$100 million each year in DC's Housing Production Trust Fund to produce or preserve affordable housing units, including senior apartments, and launched the Safe at Home program, providing grants up to \$10,000 for home adaptations allowing residents to remain safely in their homes**

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

**Yes.**

## CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES

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

**One of my most deeply held values is that the opportunity to serve as an elected official or government employee is a public trust that must be honored. Throughout my administration, I have worked diligently to ensure that all District government employees, particularly members of my cabinet, uphold the highest standards of integrity. To that end, all members of my cabinet receive annual ethics training and are required to complete procurement training.**

**While the apparent goals of the referenced bills are laudable, it is important to recognize that any legislation that seeks to limit campaign contributions has potentially profound free speech implications. Therefore, such legislation would need to strike the appropriate balance between protecting the integrity of contracting in the District while preserving First Amendment rights.**

**Still, the concerns expressed by many in the community are real, and I agree that we should do all that we can, within the limits of the law, to ensure that undue influence is removed from the procurement process. To that end, I would support legislation to reinforce the independence of the procurement process. This, in my view, is the key to ensuring that there is no undue influence when valuable contracts are in place. Further, I have emphasized that, except in urgent situations or exceptional circumstances, all procurements should be competitively bid. Finally, I remain a supporter of eliminating Council review of contracts. In this way, we can avoid lobbyist and vendor influence to ensure that unbiased procurement decisions remain undisturbed.**

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

**Since taking office, I have focused on improving the procurement process and would be honored to continue to do so going forward. I was proud to establish the Procurement Accountability Review Board (PARB) early in my administration to focus on improving the quality, efficiency, and integrity of the District's contracting and procurement processes. At regular intervals, the City Administrator, Chief Procurement Officer and I review specific procurements to ensure adherence to applicable law, regulations, processes, and procedures and to identify necessary procedural, legislative, or regulatory changes that may be necessary. In addition, I have charged the Office of Contracting and Procurement with ensuring that contracting opportunities are posted online, which gives all vendors a fair shot at being selected to perform the solicited work. We have been especially focused on making contracting opportunities more accessible to CBEs and SBEs and ensuring that District agencies comply with CBE requirements. To that end, I have charged the Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) with closely monitoring waiver requests to ensure that waivers are granted only when absolutely necessary. In**

**addition, DSLBD is focused on building the capacity of District businesses to meet the needs of the market. Through our efforts, we are actively working to reduce the need for waivers. In addition, we are proud to have exceeded our SBE contracting goals by achieving record expenditures in FY16 and FY17.**

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.

**One of my first actions when I took office in 2015 was to change the name of the office of GLBT Affairs to the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ Affairs to reflect the direction of the movement.**

**For a good portion of my first term in office, we worked in partnership with Gay Games DC to showcase the very best DC has to offer. Our bid – one of the top three globally – proved that Washington, DC is strong not simply because we are diverse, but because we celebrate our diversity and inclusion. I would be honored to have the opportunity to continue to share our story in order to bring about equality for our LGBTQ friends globally.**

**Last summer, I announced that "X," the gender neutral identifier, will be added to driver licenses and identification cards issued by the District of Columbia Department of Motor Vehicles (DC DMV). Currently, applicants must choose between male and female as a gender identifier. The new designation and modified gender designation process aligns District gender identity policies with our shared DC values and recognizes the significance of gender non-binary persons to self-certify their gender preference.**

**Additionally, in late 2017, I was proud to co-chair the Mayors Against LGBT Discrimination - a bipartisan coalition of municipal leaders dedicated to securing inclusive nondiscrimination protections for all, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals, at all levels of government. The group recognizes the special role mayors play in protecting the rights and safety of residents and in advancing policies that move our communities and our country forward. Mayors Against LGBT Discrimination is a program of Freedom for All Americans, the bipartisan campaign to win comprehensive LGBT non-discrimination protections nationwide.**