

2018 Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance 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?

Absolutely. As Chair of the Committee on Human Services I have worked to ensure the proper implementation of all of our protections for vulnerable populations. I've also been pleased to add resources to housing for individuals experiencing homelessness, including millions of dollars (hundreds of units) in the current fiscal year so that we can move more people out of shelter and into permanently subsidized homes.

Preventing homelessness and strengthening the District's homelessness emergency services are a major focus of my work. Working with a coalition of providers and residents, I recently reformed the decade-old Homeless Services Act to preserve the District's right to shelter while ultimately strengthening our emergency homeless services. Although GLAA's discussion of this legislation in "Building on Victory" indicates that the organization has concerns about the new law, I truly believe these reforms will allow us to move more families into housing and out of shelter.

Part of my work on this also included ensuring adequate resources for those fleeing partner violence. In question 11 I have shared more about how I've worked to support homeless LGBTQ youth.

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. As Councilmember, I co-introduced a bill that will require the DC Department of Health to ask about sexual orientation and gender identity when conducting its annual health survey. This increases the visibility of the community and helps us allocate funding to address unique health needs. The bill is now law.

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. In addition to the data collection bill I reference above, I also co-sponsored and voted for a law to require health care providers to get training that focuses on the needs of LGBTQ patients. Our doctors and nurses in the District should have training relevant to all the communities they serve.

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

Yes I will. And I believe the legislation referenced in my prior question will also assist with that.

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?

I support decriminalizing sex work, and I believe I will support this bill, I just need to ensure it does not inadvertently make it harder to identify and prosecute the actual criminals – the Johns and Pimps. There must be a mechanism to gather information about them through the testimony of sex workers themselves. I am concerned about how an arrest creates a record for sex workers (see my answer for q6), who are themselves victims. I'll work with my colleagues to ensure this legislation moves forward with all those things in consideration so we can prioritize the support of this vulnerable population while also creating mechanism for targeting actual criminals.

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

I introduced and moved emergency legislation, the Child Neglect and Sex Trafficking Amendment Act of 2018 when the Mayor's bill needed more time to move through Congress, to ensure that we have strong protections in place for our children who are victims of sex trafficking but also support for victims and their families as they begin to heal. I co-sponsored the B22-0329, the Trafficking Survivors Relief Amendment Act of 2017, which expunges the records of those who are arrested as a result of being victims of sex trafficking.

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

I also support the ideas proposed in "Building on Victory" such as programs including drop-in centers, transitional housing, job training and placement, counseling, addiction recovery programs, mental health services, and STD testing and treatment for at-risk populations.

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?

I was proud to support the NEAR Act, which enhances police accountability to the public through additional data collection and sharing, and I also supported the full funding of the body-worn camera initiative. So yes, I believe the OPC should have more access to the resources they need to better serve the public and I'd be glad to support that legislation.

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

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Yes. I'm very interested in efforts identified by GLAA to make confidential name and gender changes and sealing those records. With my support, this Council period we changed the law so that domestic violence survivors no longer have to worry that their information will be publicly available online. This required cooperation from agencies such as Office of Tax and Revenue, DCRA, DC Public Schools, the Department of Motor Vehicles and Voting Rolls with the DC Board of Elections. Now victims can apply to OVSJG and have their public information withdrawn by all DC agencies for a 3 year period with an option to renew for an additional 2 year period.

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 agree that the recommendations on eliminating workplace discrimination should be widely implemented. I've been doing some work in my own office on establishing guidelines for a respectful workplace and hope to lead by example by hosting and hiring Project Empowerment participants.

I also agree that we need to introduce legislation that would prevent survival and non-violent crime related offenses from being considered in job applications. With my support, Council passed "ban-the-box" legislation several years ago, and now we are working on implementation and enforcement of that law to ensure it fully achieves its goal to help returning citizens find employment. This is something near to my heart, as my late uncle served time in prison and if not for the opportunities that he had with employment when he returned to society, he would not have been able to rebuild his life.

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

As Chair of the Human Services Committee, I'm incredibly proud of having secured funding for the first year of the District's plan to end youth homelessness, which came to the Council last year unfunded. This includes shelter beds and transitional housing specifically for LGBTQ youth. As the plan enters its second year, I'm currently looking for additional funds in FY19 to enhance the Mayor's allocation to this plan.

I am also pushing the regional conversation on LGBTQ youth homelessness, having helped coordinate the Metro Washington Council of Governments first ever panel on youth homelessness and LGBT youth after seeing the data on available beds in our region. The panel highlighted the fact that many of our neighboring jurisdictions are not doing enough to provide homeless services targeted at this uniquely vulnerable population.

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

Yes. We need more programs like Mary's House throughout the District so our LGBTQ seniors are not forced back into the closet as they age. In Ward 1 I am building 85 units of low-income

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senior housing at Park Morton, as well as 15 units of permanent supportive housing for seniors to complement the short-term family housing at 14th and Clifton Streets, NW. I continue to support enhanced funding for the Housing Production Trust Fund, the Local Rent Supplement Program and maintenance funds for our public housing. Including the senior units mentioned here, I've preserved or added more than 500 units of truly affordable housing in Ward 1 since I took office in 2015.

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, in my role on both the Health and Housing committees I've worked to ensure that congregate meal funding is adequate across the District, and that access to good, healthy food is available as well through the support of programs such as Healthy Corners and Produce Plus.

My support of Senior Villages and the Safe at Home Program allows more seniors to safely age in place, with community support. I have also fought every year for additional funding for Food and Friends, a non-profit meal delivery service for those living with HIV and AIDS, when it was being cut by the health department.

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 supported all of these bills at introduction, and will vote for a bill that combines them. The first bill I ever introduced as a Councilmember was a comprehensive ethics reform bill that expanded the power of the independent Board of Ethics and Government Accountability. Several of the reforms in my bill were incorporated into ethics reform legislation that became law in the past two years.

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

I introduced and passed the Land Disposition Transparency Act to ensure the public has access to critical information about our land deals, and I have been incredibly focused on improving our contracting and procurement process. In particular I was involved with improving several key contracts – the health contract at our DC jail, the school lunch contract, and our contract for wraparound services for homeless families. Although I believe it's essential that the Council be careful that its involvement in contracts does not inadvertently politicize the process, the oversight of the Office of Contracts and Procurement, as well as the Contracts Appeals Board is an important part of my work.

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.

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- *Hours before the Mayor announced her intention to do so through regulations, I introduced a bill to allow District residents to select a non-binary gender option on their licenses, learner's permits, or ID cards issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles. This bill would make the Mayor's action on this permanent.*
- *I introduced legislation to comprehensively target and eradicate street harassment through education, culture change, and by gathering data on the problem that will help us focus our resources. Studies show that members of the LGBTQ community experience more frequent and severe harassment than others.*
- *I know that GLAA was very supportive of the Death with Dignity Act, so it's important for me to mention here why I didn't support it, but also what I'm doing now to assist with its implementation. My fear with this law was that given all of the health inequity East of the River, where we know lack of access to a continuum of care leads to later diagnosis of potentially terminal illness, we would also see inequity with how the law was applied. That said, it is now our law, and I took issue with Congress challenging it – I pushed back on that. I also am now working in the Health committee to ensure it is properly implemented. The committee recently took this up and I have been supportive, and even an advocate for those who have had difficulty using it.*
- *I'm also fighting to reduce gun violence with a bill that gives police and residents new tools to remove guns if a person presents an immediate threat to themselves or others. Sometimes called a "red flag" law, the Extreme Risk Civil Protection Act:*
 - *Allows people who know of troubling circumstances that could pose a threat to public safety to say something and feel confident that it will be swiftly followed by action.*
 - *Allows people to petition the court for a temporary extreme risk civil protection order where there is an immediate and present danger that the subject will cause injury to themselves or others.*
 - *If the court agrees, the order allows police to temporarily remove guns and prevents the subject from legally purchasing other firearms. The temporary removal is then reconsidered in a full court hearing after 14 days.*
 - *This is when a court will decide, based on testimony and evidence submitted by the petitioner and respondent, if it is more likely than not that there is significant threat of harm to self or others to justify removing the firearms for a one-year period.*

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.