

**Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, DC
2018 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. Discrimination in shelters is unacceptable. It is essential that DHS provides routine monitoring for compliance with the myriad issues facing those residing in shelters across the District. There are unique challenges for the trans population, especially within our human services programs, and these challenges must be met. Shelters subject to monitoring by the District must adhere to all applicable laws. Yes, the Office on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) Affairs and DHS must work to enhance the current cultural competency training required under the law and conducted by the Office of LGBTQ Affairs.

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. I support the efforts by local LGBTQ advocacy and health groups, including the DC Center, Whitman-Walker, and GLAA, to create a more robust working group with the Department of Health. I was disappointed that the 2016 annual report contained no data on the transgender community. Without data, we cannot identify good health policy, especially for the historically underrepresented transgender community. I also believe that District efforts on the Health Report should leverage resources from across the government, including the Office of LGBTQ Affairs, the Office on Aging, and the Department of Human Services.

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. As Chairman of the Council, I submit budget recommendations to my colleagues -- including a nearly \$3 million increase in reimbursement rates for Mental Health Rehabilitation Services (MHRS) and Adult Substance Abuse Rehabilitative Services



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(ASARS) providers that was part of the Fiscal Year 2018 budget adopted by the Council. MHRS rates had not been increased since 2013, while the last ASARS increase occurred in 2016, causing several critical providers to go out of business due to inadequate reimbursements. I believe District agencies have improved their data-driven approach to identifying disparities across populations, and I support these continued efforts. In addition, I was a co-sponsor of Bill 21-804, the “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Health Disparities Documentation Act of 2016” that would have required the Department of Health to include questions pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity for use in the Department of Health’s annual report. I support data collection on health disparities among LGBTQ populations, and am open to reintroducing Bill 21-804.

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. I support legislation to increase awareness about the availability of PrEP and PEP, and the health benefits of both HIV prevention methods. As we know, PrEP has been groundbreaking in reducing the chances of individuals contracting HIV by over 90 percent. PrEP has been only a net positive as the District continues to struggle with the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The Department of Health’s HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD, and TB Administration (HAHSTA) has set PrEP as a top priority for HIV prevention/intervention. HAHSTA has increased funding for advertising on the benefits of medications such as Truvada, and has increased the access and the number of individuals who have utilized the drug. I am 100 percent supportive of HAHSTA’s efforts, but I know that more can and must be done. According to the DC Providers PrEP Handbook, PEP has a low uptake, and DOH expects a small number of persons to recognize PEP. Given some of the barriers to individuals going on a daily PrEP regimen, I think the District should do more to expand awareness and availability of PEP for acute post-exposure interventions for those who do not or cannot utilize PrEP.

One of the largest barriers to the use of Truvada as a PrEP is the cost. That is why I have looked at ways to address this issue. Councilmember Cheh and I co-introduced Bill 22-699 to prohibit insurance companies from factoring the use of PrEP in decisions related to the issuance of disability, life, or long-term insurance policies. I look forward to refining that bill to ensure it meets the intended goal by garnering the support of health professionals and insurers.

JUDICIARY

5. **Will you support Bill 22-516, ‘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?**



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I do not support the provisions of Bill 22-516 that essentially legalize all commercial sex work. Now is not the time. The Council has amended the current law over the years (principally during my chairmanship of the Judiciary Committee 2005-2012) to recognize that sex workers are often the victims of trafficking and establish that the penalties for first-time offenders are minor. This is consistent with the position of some LBGQTQ groups that we should “deprioritize” enforcement. However, there is a great deal of collateral crime associated with commercial sex work that must be taken into account. That said, I do support the intent of Title II of Bill 22-516 which would establish a task force to improve community safety and health through the lens of commercial sex using data-driven analysis, and would provide guidance to the Mayor to improve the lives of sex workers. Such data and guidance is crucial to fully understanding the scope of sex work in the District – be it consensual commercial sex work, or illegal trafficking.

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

As with all District residents, the safety net and interventions provided by the District government are crucial to improving the lives of all marginalized communities, including commercial sex workers. As stated above, I support efforts to study this issue to guide policy changes, and I support interventions to improve the lives of sex workers. Further, I strongly believe that no marginalized community should be targeted for commercial sex work. I support deprioritization of enforcement of penalties for commercial sex workers. The goal of government should be to move sex workers away from seeking prostitution as their only, or best, means of survival.

I also believe that recent federal efforts to “fight online sex trafficking” through adoption of the “Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017” is misguided, and will force otherwise consensual commercial sex work out of safe spaces and into the shadows where there is an increased risk of negative consequences.

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

For the many people who turn to prostitution to survive, incarceration offers no help in improving their lives or providing alternatives to survival sex. The city must pursue safer and healthier alternatives. There should be wrap-around services so that a person need not go from agency-to-agency for help. Examples of housing programs include the Wanda Alston House to help GLBT youth from living on the street, and CASA Ruby to provide a drop-in center for transgender people. Project Empowerment has been a good program to help the transgender community to get job training and employment in the District government. To this end, I also support essential funding to support LBGQTQ organizations to lift up marginalized individuals.



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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 authored and then co-introduced Bill 20-63 with Councilmembers Cheh and Bowser. The bill would have improved police accountability. Because I did not chair the Judiciary Committee during Council Period 20, it did not move. However, I will look at this issue again and work with Councilmember Allen, the current chair.

I have been the foremost advocate for and defender of the Office of Police Complaints on the Council. I have supported funding increases as well as LGBTQ representation on the Police Complaints Board.

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

Yes. I would support legislation to seal records that could adversely affect the privacy or safety of individuals who have obtained court orders for name changes or that reveal a gender/sex change or reassignment. No one should face discrimination or marginalization that can be perpetuated through an invasion of privacy by pursuing publicly-available court records. An individual's gender identity is a private matter that should not be open to public scrutiny.

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?**

I have stated over and over that education and jobs are the best way to lift up individuals and communities. However, as stated in the question, the issue of unemployment in the transgender community is especially daunting. The challenge is exacerbated by the myriad issues faced by transgender individuals including homelessness, marginalization, and discrimination. The District must provide adequate wrap-around services to connect individuals with education and jobs. Those who are homeless in the District must be provided the resources to stabilize their housing situation, which will then enable them to work with other District agencies to obtain education and job opportunities.

I also believe that the District's agencies responsible for LGBTQ economic empowerment -- including the Office of LGBTQ Affairs and the Deputy Mayor for Greater Economic Opportunity, should work together with stakeholders and service providers to develop a comprehensive strategy to provide more job opportunities to the transgender community. It is also vital that the District continue to provide services to support individuals until they find work.



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YOUTH

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

Yes. As Chairman of the Council, I have put forward budgets adopted by my colleagues that have provided ever-increasing supports for all who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless. The issue of homeless LGBTQ youth has been particularly important. In 2016, I convened a Council hearing on the Mayor's proposed LGBTQ Homeless Youth Rules. I pressed the Executive on how they would ensure that gender identification would not affect the ability of families to receive shelter. In a letter, I also requested that the Office on LGBTQ Affairs and the Department of Human Services enhance cultural competency training with respect to intake procedures for homeless LGBTQ youth. I also asked DHS to better capture data regarding LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness.

I want to commend the LGBTQ community for its tremendous work in "taking care of our own" through amazing community based organizations like the Wanda Alston House, CASA Rudy, and the programs of SMYAL. The model of LGBTQ-sponsored CBOs serving homeless youth of the community has been effective and life-transforming for these youth. The District government must support these CBOs so they can expand the important and culturally competent work that they do.

SENIORS

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

Yes, I will and do support improved services and treatment of LGBTQ seniors. Many seniors in the District are struggling to make ends meet, which includes meeting their housing needs. I just recently introduced Bill 22-811, the "Housing Assistance Program for Unsubsidized Seniors Act of 2018." The purpose of that bill is to provide subsidies for senior renters in the District who neither live in project-based subsidized buildings nor receive any other type of rental assistance. While the bill has general applicability, I am supportive of focusing initiatives like this to support more services for LGBTQ seniors. I also believe that the DC Office on Aging should focus some of its outreach to LGBTQ seniors to address the needs of this population.

13. **LGBTQ 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?**



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Yes. The LGBTQ senior population is at a pivotal point. Members of the LGBTQ community who today are joining the District's senior population are the same individuals who were most affected by the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s and 1990s, who faced overt discrimination, and, even worse, their own federal and local governments. Those LGBTQ individuals entering their senior years lost their friends, families, and partners due to the confluence of events that took so much during the prime of their lives. I believe this is a contributing factor to the isolation that *Building on Victory* notes for seniors. This also highlights the need to gather better data on this growing population to make sure we have the necessary resources to provide unique supports.

The District can do more for seniors across the city to make our city age-friendly. To do so effectively requires utilizing differing strategies depending on the community. We owe it to our LGBTQ seniors to find the best outreach to ensure services that enable them to age alone and in-place.

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 am the author of the Government Contractor Pay-to-Play Prevention Amendment Act (now Bill 22-47) which would prohibit campaign donors from contracting with the District. A provision almost identical to my legislation was included as part of the Attorney General's proposed comprehensive campaign finance legislation. I have been supportive of the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety's efforts to create comprehensive reform legislation and will work with that committee to ensure that my legislation to curb the culture of pay-to-play is included in any final bill.

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

As stated above, I am the author of legislation to ban contracts for those individuals and businesses that contribute to political campaigns. However, fairness and transparency in government contracting goes far beyond pay-to-play schemes. The government relies on private companies and individuals to provide critical goods and services to provide government services. I have overseen the District's contracting and procurement process over the last six years, and while there are still concerns, it has greatly improved. I authored Bill 22-334, the "Procurement Integrity, Transparency, and Accountability Amendment Act of 2016" – now law – that made a number of changes to District procurement law to strengthen the integrity of the procurement process, increase transparency of procurements and contracts for the benefit of decision-makers and the public, and provide for increased accountability in soliciting and administering contracts.

I also rewrote Bill 22-395, the "Accessible and Transparent Procurement Amendment Act of 2018" – also now law – to provide additional transparency for business



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opportunities in order to increase competition in the procurement process, leading to better value for the taxpayer.

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

- I wrote, introduced, and moved through the Council, Bill 19-526, the “Civil Marriage Dissolution Equality Amendment Act of 2011,” which allows same-sex couples who are married in D.C. but living in jurisdictions that don't recognize their marriages, to be able to divorce in D.C. without establishing residency.
- I wrote, introduced, and moved through the Council, Bill 19-615, the “Judicial Declaration of Parentage Amendment Act of 2011.” The bill expands the jurisdiction of the D.C. courts where an adopted child was born in the District to issue a determination of parentage for a child born in the District but whose parents reside elsewhere.
- I wrote to Sibley Hospital, with other Councilmembers, to end discrimination against same-sex parents. <http://www.glaa.org/archive/2011/council2sibley0728.pdf>
- I was a co-introducer of the “Religious Freedom and Marriage Equality Amendment Act.”
- I wrote the final marriage equality bill as Chair of the Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary.
- I held a hearing with over 220 witnesses on the marriage equality bill.
- I rejected the proposed conscience clause amendment and the proposed business exemption.
- I worked with Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton to ensure that the Congress would not interfere with our marriage equality law or force a ballot measure.
- I authored the amendment recognizing marriages from other jurisdictions. This preceded our action to adopt marriage equality.
- I testified four times in writing and three times in person before the BOEE that the proposed ballot measures to overturn marriage equality were improper. I was the only Councilmember or candidate to testify.
- I was the only Councilmember or candidate to speak at the rally in Dupont Circle the night the California Supreme Court upheld Prop 8.
- I worked with GLAA to systematically change or repeal all of the laws that were used in



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Dean and Gill vs. D.C. which found that the D.C. Human Rights Act (HRA) did not require the District to provide equal marriage rights to same-sex couples.

- I wrote or introduced more than a dozen bills amending all marriage rights and responsibilities in the D.C. Code to be gender-neutral and repealing other potentially discriminatory marriage laws. The two major bills were the Omnibus Domestic Partnership Equality Amendment Act of 2008 and the Domestic Partner Equality Act of 2006.
- I wrote the “Accrued Sick and Safe Leave Act of 2008” (D.C. Law 17-152), which recognizes the rights of acting parents and domestic partners to take leave from work to take care of their families.
- I wrote and worked with GLAA, Nancy Polikoff, Michelle Zavos, and others on the Domestic Partnership Judicial Determination of Parentage Act of 2009. D.C. now has the strongest parental rights law in the country.
- I blocked the provision of the Safe Marriage Amendment Act to require mandatory testing of people for HIV in order to get married.
- I stopped efforts to create mandatory HIV testing for marriage licenses and in correction facilities. Mandatory testing would undermine our HIV prevention strategy and is not supported by public health officials.
- I repealed all of the remaining anti-gay laws in the criminal code, especially the notorious SLIP laws.
- As former chair of the Judiciary Committee, I was a tireless advocate for the Office of Police Complaints, restoring and increasing funding over time.
- I removed a section of a proposed law that would have the effect of police targeting transgender people on the suspicion that all transgender people are prostitutes.
- As former Judiciary chair, I held multiple hearings specific on the topic of “Hate Crimes in the District of Columbia and the Police Response to Reports of Hate Crimes.”
- I demanded and received the first report on hate crimes. I required that the MPD amend the report to properly identify hate crimes by their legal categories, separating crimes based on sexual orientation from those based on gender identity and expression.
- I co-sponsored and voted for the “Human Rights Clarification Amendment Act of 2005,” and I supported and voted for the “Prohibition of Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Expression Amendment Act of 2008.” (D.C. Law 17-177)
- I wrote the “Attorney General for the District of Columbia Clarification and Elected Term Amendment Act of 2010.” (D.C. Law 18-160)



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- I was a co-sponsor of Bill 16-589, “The One-Time Relocation of Licensees Displaced by The Ballpark Amendment Act of 2006,” and I voted for the final bill, now D.C. Law 17-24, which allowed additional options for nightclubs that offer nude dancing to relocate.
- I co-introduced the “Legalization of Marijuana for Medical Treatment Initiative Amendment Act of 2010” and ensured that the focus would be on medical treatment as the sponsors of the initiative intended. I managed the bill to final adoption.
- I co-introduced and worked for passage of the Department of Health Functions Amendment Act of 2005 (D.C. Law 16-90) which prohibits smoking inside workplaces including bars and restaurants.
- I co-introduced Bill 20-142, the “Japarker Deoni Jones Birth Certificate Equality Amendment Act of 2013,” and I voted for the final bill now D.C. Law 20-37.
- I was a co-sponsor of Bill 20-409, the “Marijuana Possession Decriminalization Amendment Act of 2014,” and I voted for the final bill, now D.C. Law 20-126. This is the groundbreaking law that decriminalized many marijuana offenses, and laid the groundwork for the eventual successful marijuana initiative 71.
- I was a co-sponsor of Bill 20-467, the “Record Sealing for Decriminalized and Legalized Offenses Act of 2013,” and I voted for the final bill, now D.C. Law 20-186.
- I was a co-sponsor of Bill 21-804, the “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Health Disparities Documentation Act of 2016.”
- I introduced the “Sense of the Council Supporting Passage of the Equality Act Resolution 2017” (R.22-483) calling on Congress to amend the Civil Rights Act to ensure that federal civil rights are fully inclusive of protections on the basis of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation in employment, housing, and public accommodations.
- I have repeatedly defended D.C. Law 20-261, the Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Amendment Act of 2014, against Congressional efforts to repeal or block it.
- I co-introduced D.C. Law 21-125, the Neighborhood Engagement Achieves Results Amendment Act of 2016. More importantly, I ensured full funding of the law when the Council adopted the budget for FY 2018. And I continue to support efforts to pressure the Mayor to fully implement the law.
- I have repeatedly defended D.C. Law 21-182, the Death With Dignity Act of 2016, against Congressional efforts to repeal or block it.

Please return your signed questionnaire 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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