

Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, DC
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Robert White, Jordan Grossman Lead GLAA Ratings in June 2 D.C. Council Primaries

At-Large Councilmember Robert White and Ward 2 candidate Jordan Grossman earned top ratings of +10 from the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance (GLAA) for the June 2 D.C. Council primaries. Ward 2 candidate John Fanning earned a +9. Ward 2 candidates Patrick Kennedy and Kishan Putta earned ratings of +8.5. Ward 7 Councilmember Vincent C. Gray and Ward 2 candidate Katherine Venice earned ratings of +8. GLAA held its ratings meeting by video conference on April 28. A key to available ratings points is provided below.

GLAA Ethics Disclaimer: GLAA believes that elected officials are stewards of the public trust and therefore must hold themselves accountable to the highest ethical standards. GLAA, therefore, will not issue any rating for candidates who, in their capacity as elected officials, were expelled from any elected post, or resigned, for ethics violations that include, but are not limited to, conflicts of interest, self-dealing, and malfeasance.

The following are explanations of the individual ratings for D.C. Council primary candidates.

Note: Ratings marked with an asterisk () indicate a candidate who did not return GLAA's questionnaire and was therefore rated solely on his or her known record on GLAA's issues.*

At-Large

Democratic incumbent **Robert White (+10)** agrees with GLAA on all the issues and offers impressive substance in his questionnaire responses. He has been an ally on the Council and in his past work for Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton and Attorney General Karl Racine. He has spoken out against anti-LGBTQ hate violence and co-authored legislation requiring collection of LGBTQ health data. He co-introduced a bill to decriminalize sex work, a bill to modernize language in the D.C. Official Code to reflect gender equity and inclusivity, a bill prohibiting anti-LGBTQ panic defenses, and a bill requiring care for LGBTQ seniors and seniors with HIV. He was actively engaged on our community's budget request.

Statehood-Green candidate **Ann C. Wilcox (+0.5*)** did not respond to GLAA's questionnaire. Her record (drawn from past evaluations) includes providing legal representation to GetEqual and Occupy D.C. protesters.

Libertarian candidate **Joe Bishop-Henchman (0*)** did not respond to GLAA's questionnaire and showed no record on LGBTQ issues.

Republican candidate **Marya Pickering (-3)** is non-responsive or opposed to GLAA in most of her questionnaire responses. She opposes legislation prohibiting anti-LGBTQ panic defenses. She opposes legislation revising the rioting statute to protect First Amendment expression. In opposing sex work decriminalization she cites the Family Research Council, which is designated an anti-LGBTQ hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. She is non-responsive on legislation to modernize language in the D.C. Official Code to reflect gender equity and inclusivity. She showed no record on LGBTQ issues.

Ward 2

Democratic candidate **Jordan Grossman (+10)** agrees with GLAA on the issues and provides extensive substance in his questionnaire responses. He supported LGBTQ issues as deputy legislative director for Sen. Amy Klobuchar and as chief of staff for HHS Assistant Secretary Dr. Karen DeSalvo. As a board member of the DC Chapter of the American Constitution Society he hosted events about discriminatory laws and outdated legal practices that harm the LGBTQ community, and joined with the LGBT Bar Association of DC to discuss the next decade in transgender rights. He questioned staffers of AG Karl Racine at a GLAA meeting about the AG's lack of support for the sex work decriminalization bill. He showed his support for the bill requiring care for LGBTQ seniors and seniors with HIV when Councilmember Mary Cheh gave a presentation on it at a Gertrude Stein Democratic Club meeting.

Democratic candidate **John Fanning (+9)** agrees with GLAA on the issues and provides good substance in his questionnaire responses. He has a long record of support on LGBTQ issues as a local activist and advisory neighborhood commissioner. He volunteered as a "buddy" for people with AIDS through Whitman Walker in the 80s and 90s. He was one of the first openly LGBTQ political appointees in the DC Government. He is a member of the ANC Rainbow Caucus. As an ANC chair he provided support for Whitman-Walker Health's expansion and the extension of the pride parade route into Logan. He provided direct assistance to members of the transgender community in finding employment and housing. He features LGBTQ issues in his campaign materials.

Democratic candidate **Patrick Kennedy (+8.5)** agrees with GLAA on the issues and provided extensive substance in his questionnaire responses. As an advisory neighborhood commissioner he supported funding for LGBTQ-focused groups, suggested LGBTQ-affirming language in the Comprehensive Plan, and insisted that the District not allow taxpayer dollars to be spent on travel to locations with anti-LGBTQ laws.

Democratic candidate **Kishan Putta (+8.5)** agrees with GLAA on the issues and provides good substance in his questionnaire responses. He has supported many LGBTQ issues as an advisory neighborhood commissioner. He has worked on health disparities as a public health professional. He represented DC Healthlink at Trans Pride. He testified in support of legislation prohibiting anti-LGBTQ panic defenses. As a member of the MPD Community Engagement Academy he worked with officials including the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and the Chief of Police. He worked to encourage police officers to improve how they identify and handle hate crimes.

Republican candidate **Katherine Venice (+8)** agrees with GLAA on most issues, but equivocates in her answer on sex work decriminalization. She provides excellent and extensively researched substance in her questionnaire response, which includes 62 footnotes and is the lengthiest in GLAA's 49-year history. She has volunteered hundreds of hours advocating for homeless persons in DC's shelter system, which has given her insights on gender violence, abuses by guards, and the vulnerability of homeless LGBTQ youth.

Democratic candidate **Brooke Pinto (+7.5)** mostly agrees with GLAA on the issues and provides good substance in her questionnaire responses. Regarding sex work decriminalization, she supports decriminalizing the selling of sex but not the purchasing of sex. Her record in support of LGBTQ issues includes her work for DC Attorney General Karl Racine, specifically writing a bill allowing the D.C. Attorney General to bring civil actions for bias-related crimes. She organized a Pride Month panel at OAG in 2019 featuring Charlotte Clymer and Rayceen Pendarvis. She has fought the Trump administration through lawsuits and advocacy.

Democratic candidate **Yilin Zhang (+5)** agrees with GLAA on the issues and provides some good substance in her questionnaire responses. Her limited record on LGBTQ issues includes public health work.

Democratic candidate **Daniel Hernandez (+3.5)** agrees with GLAA on the issues but provides little substance in his questionnaire responses. He showed leadership in his race by coming out early in support of sex work decriminalization.

Ward 4

Democratic candidate **Janeese Lewis George (+6.5)** agrees with GLAA on all issues and shows some substance in her questionnaire responses. Her record on LGBTQ issues includes support of sex work decriminalization and running an LGBTQ-inclusive campaign.

Democratic incumbent **Brandon Todd (+6)** agrees with GLAA on most issues but opposes us on sex work decriminalization. He offers limited substance in his questionnaire responses. His record on the Council has been mostly supportive on LGBTQ issues, though he has disagreed with GLAA on school vouchers (which he supports and we oppose). His record of allyship includes co-introducing a bill requiring collection of LGBTQ health data and a bill requiring

documentation of LGBTQ health disparities. He voted for a bill prohibiting conversion therapy on people under a conservator or guardian, a bill providing for gender nonbinary status to be reflected on ID cards, a bill permitting surrogacy parenting agreements, and a bill providing for people's gender identity to be recognized on death certificates. Until the current budget season, he has not lead on LGBTQ issues, including in his role as chair of the Committee on Government Operations.

Democratic candidate **Marlena D. Edwards (+4.5)** agrees with GLAA on most issues but opposes us on sex work decriminalization. She shows some substance in her questionnaire responses. For her record she cited her support of LGBTQ issues as a social worker and DC Department of Health staffer.

Statehood-Green candidate **Perry Redd (0*)** did not respond to GLAA's questionnaire and showed no record on LGBTQ issues.

Ward 7

Democratic incumbent **Vincent C. Gray (+8)** agrees with GLAA on most issues but opposes us on sex work decriminalization. He offers good substance in his questionnaire responses, but not as impressively as in prior races. His pro-LGBTQ record as a cabinet officer, Council chair, mayor, and councilmember is extensive. As mayor he launched the LGBTQ Youth Task Force, the Bullying Prevention Task Force, the District's first transgender employment initiative under Project Empowerment, the Transgender and Gender Identity Respect Campaign, and ended the denial of healthcare coverage to transgender residents. As Council chair in 2009 he shepherded marriage equality legislation through the Council. More recently he co-introduced a bill revising the rioting statute to protect First Amendment expression and a bill requiring care for LGBTQ seniors and seniors with HIV. He co-sponsored a bill prohibiting anti-LGBTQ panic defenses. He signed a March 2017 letter from councilmembers to the House Oversight & Government Reform Committee opposing reauthorization and expansion of the Congressionally-imposed school vouchers program.

Democratic candidate **Anthony Lorenzo Green (+4*)** did not respond to GLAA's questionnaire. As a longtime advisory neighborhood commissioner in ANC8B and ANC7B, he has supported many LGBTQ issues. He is a member of the ANC Rainbow Caucus. His advocacy of police reform has included criticism of police harassment of people in Deanwood. He testified in support of sex work decriminalization. He received the 2018 Jerry Clark "Civic Superhero" Award.

Democratic candidate **Kelvin Brown (0*)** did not respond to GLAA's questionnaire and showed no record on LGBTQ issues.

Democratic candidate **James Leroy Jennings (0*)** did not respond to GLAA's questionnaire and showed no record on LGBTQ issues.

Democratic candidate **Rebecca J. Morris (0*)** did not respond to GLAA's questionnaire and showed no record on LGBTQ issues.

Democratic candidate **Veda Rasheed (0*)** did not respond to GLAA's questionnaire and showed no record on LGBTQ issues.

Ward 8

Democratic candidate **Yaida Ford (+7)** agrees with GLAA on all issues and shows good substance in her questionnaire responses. She was legislative counsel for the Committee on Human Services under Jim Graham, and was his liaison to the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club. She mentored LGBTQ youth as a part of a community based ministry she ran in Ward 8 to help those living with trauma establish themselves emotionally, spiritually and psychologically so that they could achieve their goals and dreams. She engages with the community as an artist and songwriter. She represents LGBTQ community members in her law practice.

Democratic candidate **Mike Austin (+4.5)** agrees with GLAA on most issues but equivocates on sex work decriminalization. He shows little substance in his questionnaire responses. On record: As a board member of Widow's Pantry he has served LGBTQ homeless residents food, clothing, and connected them with social services. As legislative director to former Councilmember LaRuby May, he encouraged her to support the LGBTQ Health Disparities Documentation Act.

Democratic incumbent **Trayon White (+4.5)** agrees with GLAA on most issues, but opposes us on sex work decriminalization and falsely conflates it with human trafficking. He provides little substance in his questionnaire responses. As a member of the Council he co-introduced a bill requiring collection of LGBTQ health data and a bill requiring care for LGBTQ seniors and seniors with HIV, co-sponsored a bill providing for gender nonbinary status to be reflected on ID cards, and voted for a bill prohibiting conversion therapy on people under a conservator or guardian. He signed a March 2017 letter from councilmembers to the House Oversight & Government Reform Committee opposing reauthorization and expansion of the Congressionally-imposed school vouchers program. On the downside, in 2018 he caused a national scandal with anti-Semitic comments derived from Minister Louis Farrakhan, whose Nation of Islam is designated a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Democratic candidate **Stuart Anderson (+3)** disagrees with GLAA on multiple issues. He opposes sex work decriminalization and legislation prohibiting anti-LGBTQ panic defenses, and equivocates on increased funding for LGBTQ budget priorities. He shows little substance in his questionnaire responses. On record: as a leader in organizing the District's commemorations of Dr. King for eight years, he has worked with many LGBTQ people including the late Jerry Clark. As a community engagement specialist for the Anacostia Coordinating Council he worked with Check It Enterprises. He has run on a slate with several LGBTQ people, and is supportive of his gender nonbinary grandchild.

Republican candidate **Nate Derenge (-2)** opposes GLAA on every issue. He provides no substance in his questionnaire responses and showed no record on LGBTQ issues.

GLAA rates candidates on a scale of -10 to +10, based on their answers to our questionnaire and their record on behalf of the LGBTQ community. The questionnaire addresses a variety of issues including public health, public safety, human rights, youth, seniors, and home rule. More information is available online at <http://glaa.org/projects/elections/>

All candidates were provided a copy of "Building on Victory," GLAA's 2020 policy brief on LGBT issues in Washington, D.C.

Ratings should not be interpreted as endorsements. GLAA does not endorse candidates in partisan elections. GLAA has rated candidates in every D.C. primary and general election since 1971. Independent Council candidates will be rated prior to the general election.

Founded in 1971, the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, D.C. is an all-volunteer, non-partisan, non-profit political organization that defends the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the Nation's Capital. We are the nation's oldest continuously active LGBTQ civil rights organization.

Key to available ratings points

Questionnaire yes/no	+/- 2
Questionnaire substance	+/- 4
Candidate's public record	+/- 4
Total available	+/- 10

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