

Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, DC 2020 Questionnaire for D.C. Council Candidates

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.

HEALTH

1. Will you support budgets that target funds to address LGBTQ health disparities, including in mental health and substance abuse treatment, and mandate data collection and timely reporting on these populations?

Yes. Access to health care services is a matter of life and death, and the specific needs of the LGBTQ community must be specifically addressed in the DC budget. I would never have sat on the budgetary request made by over a dozen LGBTQ community organizations last year for additional funding to address these needs. We can't afford to delay when people's health is at stake. I support data collection because it helps improve services and outcomes. We need evidence-based policy and that starts with quality data.

JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC SAFETY

2. Will you support Bill 23-435, the Tony Hunter and Bella Evangelista Panic Defense Prohibition Act of 2019?

The gay panic defense and trans panic defense are an insult to LGBTQ people who are victims of crimes, and to any real sense of criminal justice. I will absolutely support this bill, and other measures to recognize in law the fundamental rights of LGBTQ people to be who they are without blaming them for violence committed against them.

3. Will you support revision of the DC Riot Statute, Section 22-1322 of the District's penal code, to correct its overly broad language that allows abuse of prosecutorial discretion against individuals who exercise their First Amendment rights?



What the penal code calls a riot describes not only Stonewall, but dozens if not hundreds of LGBTQ demonstrations in the face of systemic oppression, including here in DC. The LGBTQ community, like all marginalized communities, has its First Amendment rights constantly threatened by law enforcement and government action, and if I am elected I will work to make sure our penal code is narrowed to prevent its misuse to target the LGBTQ community or anyone else who uses the public square to protest mistreatment.

HUMAN RIGHTS

4. Will you support a Gender Equity and Neutrality in the Official Code Amendment Act to update the D.C. Official Code as necessary to ensure that outdated terms are removed or replaced as well as to utilize language inclusive of the gender diversity of our population?

Yes. Gender neutral pronouns, including the singular they, are as old as the English language. There is no reason for our laws to misgender DC residents, either in their text or in their impact. Human dignity must come before convention and habit. Several prominent style guides have endorsed this idea, if one needs that validation. Unfortunately, none of these arguments swayed the incumbent who cast an insulting vote against the Gender Equity and Neutrality in the Official Code Amendment Act.

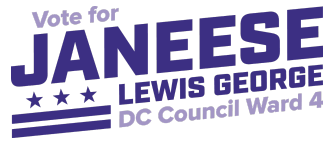
5. Will you support Bill 23-0318, Community Safety and Health Amendment Act of 2019, to decriminalize consensual sex work for people 18 or older and create a task force to monitor the implementation and effects of the act?

I support this bill and am on the record with my support. I am a strong proponent for a public health approach to crime in DC. We must focus our resources on violence reduction and end our criminalization of Black and brown women, girls, and trans and gender-nonconforming individuals. We should work hard to fight coercion, as the bill makes clear.

6. Will you support increased funding for LGBTQ budget priorities, including fully funding the Office of Human Rights and establishing a new competitive community development grant program in the Office of LGBTQ Affairs?

Yes. In these uncertain times, when DC's budget is unknown and when many, many people need support from our elected leaders, we must act to make sure that people who are disproportionately hurt by crises are prioritized by our government. LGBTQ workers lost their jobs in this pandemic. LGBTQ business owners lost their businesses in this pandemic. DC government should be here to help the community get through this crisis, and to support the community to thrive in stronger times.

When the LGBTQ community made a coordinated ask in 2019, the incumbent didn't act and the request wasn't considered for the budget since it needed action in his committee. Those grants could be helping people now had he even just allowed this to come to a vote in 2019. ([link](#))



7. Will you support a study of employment of transgender individuals in the government of the District of Columbia as a first step to creating a truly inclusive workplace and the implementation of transgender employment initiatives?

Yes. How can a government claim to protect the trans community if the trans people working for the government don't have a safe and supportive workplace? We must make sure that trans people, who are so much more likely than the rest of the population to be un- or underemployed, can find stable, healthy places to earn a living, especially in the coming recession.

YOUTH

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

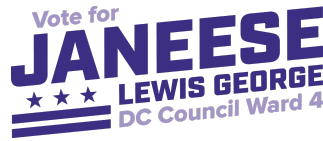
Yes. We need more transitional housing and better services to help people who become homeless get back on their feet — especially trans youth, who experience homelessness far too often because of a lack of family support. I support the recommendations in ANC 1A's letter to the Office of Planning to make DC's comprehensive plan address LGBTQ+ youth homelessness.

I will continue to support our Ward 4 Community organizations like CasaRuby DC, No Justice No Pride that provide critical housing, food and support needs.

SENIORS

9. Will you support improved services and treatment for LGBTQ seniors, including affirming senior housing and tenant based rental assistance and the Care for LGBT Seniors and Senior with HIV Amendment Act of 2019?

Yes, I would support this bill, which the incumbent didn't support in prior years and didn't bring for a vote until it was an election year. It should have been approved without delay, when it was first introduced--we can't delay when people's health and well-being are in the balance.



HOME RULE

10. Will you oppose Trump administration efforts to nullify the legal identities of transgender individuals, such as by assigning a person's gender based on their "original" birth certificate?

Yes. Transphobia from the federal government cannot be allowed to infect DC, and I will work against these attacks however I can.

11. *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.*

I take positions based on what's right. When presented with a new issue, I begin by asking "who are the most vulnerable people involved and how do the policy proposals impact them?" When I was presented with the *Community Safety and Health Amendment Act of 2019* (Sex Work Decriminalization Bill) I saw the importance and supported it decisively. The incumbent has used it as a major point of attack against my candidacy, smearing sex workers as a scourge on communities. I have stood by my position. My campaign includes many gay men and women, trans people, bi people, and other queer-identifying people. Many of our leaders are part of the LGBTQ+ community and I greatly value their advice on policy and politics alike. I am proud to be an ally and would be honored to fight with you and champion your issues on the Council.

Please return your signed questionnaire responses by Friday, April 17, 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.

This questionnaire was returned in compliance with the deadline, via electronic mail. Thanks for all you do to make DC more just and for including me in the process.