

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. I strongly support targeting funds that address LGBTQ health disparities. Because of our reliance on federal grants for programming, the Department of Health and Department of Behavioral Health provide funding for general health interventions and all too often the LGBTQ community is ignored. Accordingly, it is even more critical that local dollars be programmed through the budget process to address these health disparities.

I would also require that the Department of Health to publish an annual report on LGBTQ health outcomes that go beyond the data collected on the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) questionnaire. I would explore passing legislation to require a more robust data collection system and make available data dashboards to monitor our progress in improving health outcomes for the LGBTQ community.

JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC SAFETY

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

Yes. Some criminal defendants have claimed that a victim's sexual orientation or gender identity caused their attack. While this defense may appear to be preposterous to most rational adults today, but unfortunately it has been successfully used to evade a hate crime conviction. Juries must be given clearer instruction to disregard any attempt by the defense to excuse violence based on a victim's actual or perceived identity. I would be honored to co-sponsor and rally support for this legislation until it is passed and signed into law.

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?

Yes. I am a life-long supporter of the most liberal interpretation of the First Amendment. I was honestly unaware that the US Attorney's Office filed Riot charges against 192 protestors and while it is fortunate that there were no convictions and most charges dropped, it is important that the law be revised to make it more clear what an actual riot is.

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. One of the strengths of the District is the gender diversity of our population. Language matters and since the DC code is the foundation of how government delivers services and code language can be used to justify discrimination. (A good example is that there was some initial resistance to enforce the gender-neutral restroom provisions because international plumber's code stated that all bathrooms be gender segregated.)

It is of utmost importance that language used in our laws, codes and regulations is inclusive.

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?

Decriminalization is not enough. I support complete legalization of consensual sex work for people over 18 so that it can be properly regulated, licensed and taxed. Legalization will allow sex work to move from the streets and into safer, healthier work environments. It will also make it easier to intervene with sex traffickers and if sex work was currently legal, it might have sex workers eligible for unemployment benefits and possibly federal stimulus money. I also support the creation of a task force to inform the implementation of the new law.

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. There is a demonstrated need for more LGBTQ funding in the District government to specially address service gaps for members of the transgender community, LGBTQ youth and seniors. While I would prefer that each agency be tasked to develop LGBTQ specific funding streams, it might be necessary for the Office of LGBTQ Affairs to expand its grant making capacity. I would secure more funding for the OHR so that the agency can adequately investigate discrimination cases in a timely manner. Although it might be more challenging in the next few years, as we don't know the full impact of COVID-19 on budget priorities, but I will be a strong champion for ensuring adequate funding for LGBTQ priorities.

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. The District of Columbia has increased the employment of transgender individuals and there should be a good sample size for a survey on how the government can be more inclusive. This is a good first step. I would also convene an oversight hearing to evaluate the efficacy of current government employment programs and identify funding for LGBTQ specific career development programming. Additionally, I would convene a meeting of the business owners in Ward 2 to identify barriers to hiring more transgender employees and create a strategic plan with clear measurable goals to increase employment opportunities for the LGBTQ community.

YOUTH

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

Yes. While it is great that the District currently funds three LGBTQ specific transitional housing programs, it is not enough. Anywhere between 37-43% of all homeless youth in DC identify as LGBTQ. LGBTQ youth are more likely to be disowned by their families and experience higher levels of trauma. In addition to creating more transitional housing for youth over the age of 18, there is a critical need to offer improved services for LGBT youth in our foster care system and explore the possibility of funding a LGBTQ specific group home for youth that age out of foster care.

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 LGBTQ Seniors and Seniors with HIV Amendment Act of 2019?

Yes. LGBTQ seniors are another vulnerable and underserved population that would benefit from specified dedicated funding. I would support the allocation of funding from the Housing Production Trust Fund to build the District's very first LGBTQ Senior Housing facility. In addition to my advocacy for a standalone senior wellness center to be built in Ward 2, I would find the funds necessary to establish LGBTQ outreach and programming at all the City's senior wellness centers.

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. I will do everything possible to oppose the Trump administration's efforts to nullify the legal identities of transgender individuals. I would advocate for including money in our budget to fund legal challenges to any Federal initiatives that violate the District Human Rights Act. I would even go so far as to help organize protests in the streets if necessary to fight this administration's efforts to stifle the individual identities of members of the LGBTQ community.

My Record

- Volunteered as a "buddy" for AIDS victims with Whitman Walker in the 80s and 90s.
- One of the first openly LGBTQ political appointees in the DC Government.
- Long-time member of the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club
- Member of the Rainbow Caucus as an elected ANC Commissioner.
- As chair of the ANC, provided support for Whitman Walker Health's expansion and the extension of the pride parade route into Logan.
- Provided direct assistance to members of the transgender community in finding employment and housing