

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. In fact, I co-authored the LGBTQ Health Data Collection Amendment Act of 2018 with Councilmember David Grosso. This bill ensures that the District has the tools to understand the health needs of our LGBTQ residents by requiring annual monitoring and public reporting on health-risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among the LGBTQ community. This bill also pushed back on proposals by the Trump administration that were trying to pretend as if the LGBTQ community did not exist. By improving accuracy in public data collection, we can take the next and best steps to eliminating LGBTQ health disparities.

I also believe that we need to continue to publicly combat the stigma around the health disparities in the LGBTQ communities by supporting organizations that are addressing HIV/AIDS and issues that adversely impact the community. In line with this, every year ahead of Pride celebrations, I introduce a ceremonial resolution honoring DC Black Lesbian & Gay Pride and the work that they are doing to address health inequities.

-Robert White

JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC SAFETY

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

Yes. I proudly co-introduced this bill. “LGBTQ panic” defenses have been far too common in courtrooms, and it is long overdue to put an end to this.

I am also pleased that the bill includes anti-bias jury instructions for criminal trials. With each step that we take to protect communities, we should also be educating our fellow residents and combating ignorance.

-Robert White

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. The current law is overly broad and subject to abuse.

We saw this issue play out nationally during the Trump Inauguration protests, where this statute was exercised by our law enforcement officers. Journalists and peaceful protesters were arrested and charged along with people who had come to riot. The case undeniably shed light on the vagueness of the statute.

Our laws need to be clear and protect people's First Amendment rights. I recognize that the groups that are usually speaking out and exercising their rights are groups that have been marginalized or mistreated. We have to be careful that we are not further criminalizing marginalized and voiceless people.

-Robert White

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, and I co-introduced the Gendered Terms Modernization Amendment Act.

Gender-based statutory language carries weight, and demeans and marginalizes communities that have been marginalized far too long and does not reflect gender diversity. We should be looking at all of the ways that we can move toward a more inclusive government and city.

-Robert White

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 co-introduced the Community Safety and Health Amendment Act. I have been publically vocal about the need to address the violence and lack of resources that sex workers face. We know that many engaging in sex work as a form of survival, and it stems from overt discrimination in the job and housing markets.

At the hearing on this bill last October, many residents were concerned that the Council was not considering the public safety of all groups. Many former sex workers also raised some precautions about the safety of the sex workers that we have to examine as this bill moves forward.

-Robert White

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. I support fully funding the Office of Human Rights. Unfortunately, it's an agency that our LGBTQ community relies on more than any of us would want.

In 2019, we tragically lost two members of the LGBTQ community, Zoe Spears and Ashanti Carmon, within a few months of each other. In response, I sent a letter to the Mayor and the Chairman of the Council, with a call to action, to ask that we work with government agencies and LGBTQ organizations, take immediate action to address the urgent needs of LGBTQ residents. It was an important first step.

I support establishing a community development grant program. We know that access to safe housing and community spaces can save lives within the LGBTQ community, and we have passionate community leaders and organizations that are more than willing to expand their work.

-Robert White

I will attach the letters referenced to the endorsement application package.

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. This is a policy area that I am currently researching, meeting with various LGBTQ organizations about, and reaching out to other jurisdictions that are also seeking ways to create a more inclusive workplace.

There is explicit discrimination against transgender individuals in the workplace. Beyond the study, I believe the government has to take the lead with more intentional hiring practices. Government has to set an example for the private sector.

Additionally, I successfully pushed for the Council to begin including ‘LGBTQ Inclusivity Training’ onto the list of required training for Council staff.

-Robert White

YOUTH

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

Yes. LGBTQ youth face higher levels of homelessness and disconnection from school in our city, which lead to high physical health, mental health, employment, and housing needs. If we intervene earlier with necessary supports, our LGBTQ youth won’t have to face such steep challenges through adulthood.

We have to set up our LGBTQ youth for success in as many ways as possible. Housing is the most stabilizing resource we can offer youth, and so extended transitional housing just makes sense here.

We have seen how LGBTQ youth can thrive when we support and invest in them - Check It Enterprises had its origins in 2012 as an LGBTQ youth fashion clothing project started by members of the Check It youth gang created by LGBTQ youth to protect themselves. They have now become pillars in their community, creating a safe space for the community to host events and take care of each other.

We can have more stories like this one, but only if we invest and support.

-Robert White

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 and Yes.

I agree with providing more housing support to LGBTQ seniors, and I've prioritized this issue during my time on the Council. Mary's House for Older Adults has done a tremendous job of shedding light on the housing obstacles that are particularly challenging for LGBTQ seniors, such as housing affordability and isolation. One of the bills that I have introduced and am most excited about is the Senior Co-Living Program Establishment Act - the Golden Girls Bill. This bill will give a stipend to seniors who rent rooms to other seniors, allowing them to age-in-place while also providing support and companionship to one another. This bill remains a priority, and I'll fight to get it passed by the full Council.

I co-introduced the Care for LGBT Seniors and Senior with HIV Amendment Act because we must protect our LGBTQ seniors from the unnecessary and harmful discrimination that keeps them from engaging with their neighbors and our community. As recently as our last budget cycle, I fought for funds to expand community dining, planned social events, and peer support opportunities for LGBTQ senior citizens.

I remain committed to actively working to support our LGBTQ seniors.

-Robert White

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. This is a clear attack toward the LGBTQ community, and the effects would be devastating for many of our residents. I will do everything in my power and leverage all of the tools our government has to ensure this does not happen.

-Robert White

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.

Bills Introduced:

- [B22-0840 - LGBTQ Health Data Collection Amendment Act of 2018](#)
- [B23-0537 - Senior Co-Living Program Establishment](#)
- [B23-0404 - Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development Limited Grant Making Authority for Check IT Enterprises Amendment Act of 2019](#)
- <http://lms.dccouncil.us/Download/38064/CER22-0096-Introduction.pdf>
- <http://lms.dccouncil.us/Download/40254/CER22-0337-Introduction.pdf>

Related coverage:

- https://www.washingtonblade.com/2018/10/26/opinion-lgbtq-health-data-collection/?fbclid=IwAR2-7Ek42wAa811o1oyyMY68iRtkwzKvwIPCyrlhraP_ATPZ0rU9S16Awrl
- <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2020/04/03/check-it-completes-purchase-of-anacostia-buildings/>

-Robert White

Contact: Mtokufa Ngwenya, Chief of Staff: (202) 724-8174; mngwenya@dccouncil.us

Councilmember Robert White's Statement on Violence Against the LGBTQ Community

The recent spate of attacks against LGBTQ members of our community is part of a pattern of violence in our city and around the country, and it has to stop. We cannot and will not tolerate hate crimes such as these in the District of Columbia. No one should endure the terror of being targeted and attacked for being who they are. I want my LGBTQ neighbors to know that I see you, I hear you, I support you, and I am deeply troubled and disturbed by these attacks.

On March 30, I was saddened to hear of Ashanti Carmon's still unsolved murder. And on June 13, I was stunned to hear that her friend, Zoe Spears, was also shot and killed just blocks away. I know the DC transgender community is reeling from these losses. Yet, even at the LGBTQ community center Casa Ruby, where they should feel safest, transgender women were recently threatened by a man with a gun.

In 2019, ten transgender women have been violently killed in the United States; all were African-American. Fatal violence against transgender women of color is a national issue and having two of these horrific deaths in our own backyard is an outrage. Transgender women experience clear anti-transgender bias, and their transgender status often puts them at risk in other ways. They experience discrimination in the workplace, when they look for housing, and even when trying to access government services. This sometimes forces them into unemployment, homelessness, or survival sex work, all of which puts them at greater risk of violence.

LGBTQ individuals continue to face discrimination and harassment in public spaces both in DC and across the country. Just a few days ago, Karl Craven and Braden Brecht were attacked on U Street by men using a homophobic slur. DC is, and should always be, a welcoming community. It is our responsibility to address and denounce all hate crimes.

We have not done enough to protect and support LGBTQ residents in the District. I plan to work with the Mayor, my colleagues on the Council of the District of Columbia, government agencies, and LGBTQ organizations and individuals to address LGBTQ access to basic needs and services such as safe housing and mental health. I will work with the rest of the Council to release a statement of no tolerance for violence against transwomen and sex workers. I also will introduce legislation to create a platform for transwomen of color to shape the policies and programs that they believe they need to improve both health and safety. And I will work with the Council to hold a roundtable with government agencies and community organizations that work with transgender women to discuss how we as a city can better serve them.

I am sending letters to Mayor Muriel Bowser and to Chairman Phil Mendelson to ask for their support and assistance in addressing these issues. We can do better to protect marginalized communities. I ask the Mayor, the Council, and the District as a whole to join me as I learn about the issues and fears LGBTQ members of our community face and to take action to improve their safety and overall well-being.



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

ROBERT C. WHITE, JR.
COUNCILMEMBER, AT-LARGE
CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND PROCUREMENT

July 2, 2019

The Honorable Phil Mendelson
Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 504
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

I know that you are aware of the recent attacks against LGBTQ members of our community and agree that no one should endure the terror of being targeted and attacked for being who they are.

This year, ten transgender women have been violently killed in the United States; all were African-American. Fatal violence against transgender women of color is a national problem and having two of these horrific murders in our region is an outrage. Transgender women experience clear anti-transgender bias, and their transgender status often puts them at risk in other ways. They experience discrimination in the workplace, when they look for housing, and even when trying to access government services. As you know, this sometimes forces them into unemployment, homelessness, or survival sex work, all of which puts them at greater risk of violence.

LGBTQ individuals continue to face discrimination and harassment, both in DC and across the country. In the aftermath of the deaths of Ashanti Carmon and Zoe Spears, the threat of violence near Casa Ruby, and attacks on Karl Craven and Braden Brecht on U Street, I believe we are called to action.

In the John A. Wilson Building and in our Council offices, we have a diverse staff and a culture of inclusion. But we have to do more to protect and support LGBTQ residents, particularly now when discrimination and violence seem to be increasing. I would like to work with you, our colleagues on the Council, government agencies, and LGBTQ organizations and individuals to address LGBTQ access to basic needs and services, such as safe housing and mental health. I would like your support for legislation I plan to introduce to create a platform for transgender women of color to shape the policies and programs that they believe they need to improve both their health and safety.



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1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
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ROBERT C. WHITE, JR.
COUNCILMEMBER, AT-LARGE
CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND PROCUREMENT

July 2, 2019

The Honorable Muriel Bowser
Mayor of the District of Columbia
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mayor Bowser:

I know that you are aware of the recent attacks against LGBTQ members of our community and agree that no one should endure the terror of being targeted and attacked for being who they are.

This year, ten transgender women have been violently killed in the United States; all were African-American. Fatal violence against transgender women of color is a national problem and having two of these horrific murders in our region is an outrage. Transgender women experience clear anti-transgender bias, and their transgender status often puts them at risk in other ways. They experience discrimination in the workplace, when they look for housing, and even when trying to access government services. As you know, this sometimes forces them into unemployment, homelessness, or survival sex work, all of which puts them at greater risk of violence.

LGBTQ individuals continue to face discrimination and harassment, both in DC and across the country. In the aftermath of the deaths of Ashanti Carmon and Zoe Spears, the threat of violence near Casa Ruby, and attacks on Karl Craven and Braden Brecht on U Street, I believe we are called to action.

We can and must do more to protect and support LGBTQ residents in the District. I would like to work with you, my colleagues on the Council, government agencies, and LGBTQ organizations and individuals to address LGBTQ access to basic needs and services, such as safe housing and mental health. I request your assistance in identifying funds specifically for addressing the health and safety of LGBTQ residents. I am also working with the Council on legislation to create a platform for transgender women of color to shape the policies and programs that would improve service delivery and their safety, and I ask for your support.

We can do better to protect marginalized communities. I hope you will join me as I learn more about the issues and fears LGBTQ members of our community face and in taking action to improve their safety and overall well-being. I look forward to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. White, Jr.', with a stylized flourish.

Robert C. White, Jr.
Councilmember, At-Large
Chair, Committee on Facilities and Procurement
Council of the District of Columbia

For Immediate Release: March 3, 2020

Contact: Rita D. Lewis, Communications Director: (202) 256-7154; rlewis@dccouncil.us

Robert White Helps Community Save Local Institutions And Is Creating A Model to Prevent Local Business Displacement

Councilmember Robert White today announced final passage of his bill to help three local institutions avoid displacement with the purchase of the buildings they currently rent. White said that when the Check-It Enterprises, We Act Radio, and District Culture buildings on Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE in Ward 8 were put on the market for sale, they came to his office for assistance. “I had to work with them to figure out how to save these buildings that have become a major community and social action hub.”

Check-It Enterprises is a business started by former LGBTQ gang members. In addition to selling clothing, Check-It Enterprises uses its headquarters to teach youth about the fashion industry. “Equally important to the work they do,” White said, “Check-It Enterprises has become a community hub hosting countless community meetings, non-profit events, and social action planning meetings. The emergency crime meeting that resulted in Attorney General Karl Racine’s Cure the Streets crime interruption program happened on this property.”

White’s creates a \$2 million grant to assist the three businesses in purchasing their properties. This is a unique legislative move, but White said that desperate times require new tools. He said, “I keep seeing residents use all their resources to start and maintain businesses just to lose everything when their buildings are sold and slated for redevelopment.”

White said some other local organizations and businesses need the same help and that he believes the DC government must step in. “DC government created the economic environment that is now pushing out local institutions and making the city too expensive for non-profits that do work the government can’t do. We can’t create the environment for displacement and then turn our backs on those displaced.”

White said he is using this effort as a model to develop broader legislation to help more organizations and businesses buy their buildings and avoid displacement. White credits the businesses, Mayor Bowser, Councilmembers Trayon White and Kenyan McDuffie, and C. Duane Gautier, the building owner, for working with him to achieve a rare success story.

“Redevelopment keeps happening in our communities, but not with our communities. Now, redeveloping these buildings put residents and local business owners in the driver’s seat,” White said.

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OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER AT-LARGE

ROBERT WHITE

For Immediate Release: July 2, 2019

Contact: Mtokufa Ngwenya, Chief of Staff: (202) 724-8174; mngwenya@dccouncil.us

Councilmember Robert White Sent Letters to Mayor Bowser and Chairman Mendelson Regarding Violence Against the LGBTQ Community

As a follow up to the recent attacks against LGBTQ members of our community, specifically transgender women of color, Councilmember White asked Mayor Bowser for her support on two items. First, Councilmember White requested the Mayor's assistance in identifying funds specifically for addressing the health and safety of LGBTQ residents. Second, he informed the Mayor that he would be working with his Council colleagues on legislation to create a platform for transgender women of color to shape the policies and programs that would improve service delivery and their safety.

In his letter to Chairman Mendelson, Councilmember White asked that the Council work together with government agencies and LGBTQ organizations and individuals to address LGBTQ access to basic needs and services, such as safe housing and mental health. Councilmember White also asked for the Chairman's support when he introduces legislation to create a platform for transgender women of color.

Councilmember White said, "The Council and the Administration can do a better job protecting marginalized communities. I ask that the District as a whole join me as I learn about the issues and fears LGBTQ members of our community face and to take action to improve their safety and overall well-being."

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