

GLAA QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES FOR FRANKLIN GARCIA

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 will. Now more than ever, due to this on-going COVID-19 pandemic, we need to allocate resources that will specially serve the LGBTQ+ and other underserved communities for not only for mental health and substance abuse, but other critical areas of healthcare as well. These are groups that, for far too long, have been underserved.

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 will. I was happy to see our city deal with this important issue that requires an anti-bias instruction in criminal trials regarding defenses that seek to excuse certain crimes—such as murder or assault on the grounds of the victim’s sexual orientation or gender identity. I remember very much Bella, and helped bring wide exposure to her case, including building a website in her memory. This is a timely and appropriate legislation that will have my full support.

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 support amending the Rioting or Inciting Riot Act so that it more appropriately serves its purpose to keep DC safe. It is currently far too broad, vague and ambiguous, and it threatens the ability of individuals to congregate and protest peacefully, as envisioned by our founders. The exercising of first amendment rights should not be up for prosecutorial discretion.

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Equity and Neutrality in the Official Code Amendment Act to update the D.C. Official Code as necessary to ensure that outdated terms are removed or replaced as well as to utilize language inclusive of the gender diversity of our population?

I fully support legislation that would modernize the D.C. Official Code with gender-inclusive language that reflects the diversity of the District of Columbia population.

5. Will you support Bill 23-018, 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?

Yes, I will. And, would go further to include and protect sex work in the LGBTQ+ community. The Task Force should also dedicate resources at studying the impact and protection of these communities, once legislation is enacted. Monitoring the implementation and effects of the act is essential in documenting successful outcomes to serve as a model for other cities and to ensure that the act is operating the way it is intended, to protect our citizens.

6. Will you support 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 will. I am committed to fully funding the OHR, and ensuring that we have all the resources we need in the community.

This is a perfect example of why I decided to run. Minorities, not only ethnic LGBTQ, but in all groups have been getting crumbs for far too long. Fully funding essential offices like OHR, LGBT, MOLA, APIA and others is important as we continue to fight for full-representation. Grants help non-profits provide critical services such as housing assistance, health care, mental health and counseling, that would otherwise not be funded for certain vulnerable communities. I very much would advocate for this.

7. Will you support the 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 a transgender employment initiative?

Yes, I have been a strong supporter of the transgender community, not only in DC, but beyond, as I know transgender individuals are targeted and face the most discrimination in education, training, employment, safe work environment, fair and equal pay and more. Additionally, the District of Columbia needs to have a government that reflects the composition of its residents.

YOUTH

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

Youth homelessness is a big problem, both in DC and nationwide. In addition to LGBTQ youth, it includes children in foster care who age out of the system, adult children from impoverished or dysfunctional family environments, and young victims of abuse.

I believe that the District of Columbia should specifically focus on targeting a portion of their homelessness prevention efforts towards addressing these issues.

How can this be done? By investing in specifically targeted transitional housing which includes supports such as mental and general health services, coordination with available employment and training resources, with the goal of eventually placing permanent and stable housing.

SENIORS

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

Yes, I fully support the “Care for LGBTQ Seniors and Seniors with HIV Amendment Act of 2018” as introduced by DC Councilmembers Mary Cheh and Anita Bonds. It is

important that the DC Office of Aging and Commission on Aging include LGBTQ Seniors and Seniors Living with HIV as a group of greatest social need under the Older Americans Act. In addition, I support amending the Human Rights Act of 1977 to establish a LGBTQ HIV long-term care bill or rights.

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. As the DC’s U.S. Rep. Before the House, I have been a champion of statehood for the District of Columbia. I believe that the District of Columbia should have the autonomy to administer their public services, as its residents and duly elected representatives see fit. DC’s current law provides a streamlined and accessible process which makes DC a model of modernized birth certificate policy.

As of now, individuals can request updated birth certificates directly from the DC Department of Health Vital Records Division without the onerous medical and court requirements of the past. Once we achieve full self-determination in the near future—under a new administration—we would not be obligated to change existing law, and could continue to treat of transgender citizens with the respect and dignity that they deserve.