



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. I not only believe in equality but also equity -- and to me, that means lifting up populations who have continually been marginalized so everyone begins in an equal place, not just ends up in an equal place. That means focusing on LGBTQ health disparities by investing in a targeted way, and continuing to fund their care along with other populations.

JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC SAFETY

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

Absolutely, yes. When crimes are committed based solely or in part because of something "different" about that person, it's discriminatory and must be prosecuted as such.

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. It has become clearer given the “good trouble” that’s been occurring in the District this year that we have to protect our right to free speech and assembly, and revising the Riot Statute would be a good step toward that goal.

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Equity and Neutrality in the Official Code Amendment Act to update the D.C. Official Code as necessary to ensure that outdated terms are removed or replaced as well as to utilize language inclusive of the gender diversity of our population?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. Our Code should reflect what we stand for as a population, and be a guide for how we treat each other. Using terms that are inclusive and thoughtful helps guide not only us but future generations in respecting and appreciating everyone.

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?

Yes. People need to be brought out of underground economies to keep consensual sex work safe and healthy.

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. As stated previously, it’s important to create equity -- not just equality -- in our government. That begins with increasing funding and targeting priorities that lift up the LGBTQ population and ensure inclusion and success.

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. Our government should reflect our people, and commissioning such a study would be the beginning of creating representation that actually embodies our diversity.

YOUTH

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

Yes. Working as an attorney at the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless for the last eight years, housing has become an issue very close to my heart and is the biggest priority in my campaign. I am advocating for a system called social housing, of which more information can be found on my website at willfordc.com/social-housing-resources, that creates deeply and truly affordable housing accessible to anyone. I believe through this model we can solve our housing crisis and offer a safe home to all, including LGBTQ youth.

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. LGBTQ seniors -- and everyone, for that matter -- must be ensured a human right to stable housing and free healthcare without prejudice.

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. It's unconscionable to me that the administration and other leaders are under the assumption they can dictate to someone who they are, instead of treating people with respect and dignity.



Please give more than a simple "yes" or "no" response to our questions — though you should begin with a "yes" or "no." The depth and completeness of your answers play a major role in determining your final rating.

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. Feel free to attach relevant documents such as letters to the editor, legislative testimony, campaign literature, etc.

Please return your signed questionnaire responses by Friday, September 18 via email, preferably as an attachment in PDF format (for loading on GLAA's website) to equal@glaa.org. Thank you.

Signed: _____

William R. Merrifield, Jr.

September 18, 2020