

GLAA QUESTIONNAIRE

Housing

- Do you support providing sufficient affordable housing units for all households earning less than 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI), such as, allocating vacant apartments to very low-income households, ensuring sufficient funds for the Housing Production Trust Fund are dedicated to these renters, and strengthening inclusionary zoning laws?

Yes. Perhaps no jurisdiction in the country has tackled the issue of housing more aggressively than ours. For instance, last year, we launched a new one-stop shop to connect current and future homeowners in the District to more than 50 resources that help residents thrive as DC homeowners. The site, frontdoor.dc.gov, makes District resources more accessible so that residents can prepare to buy a home, get help paying their mortgage, make home repairs and improvements, save money on their property taxes, and navigate the requirements of homeownership.

In 2014, I promised to invest \$100 million in affordable housing--an historic investment at the time. Since then, we've made history again, and again. In March of this year, I announced a \$500 million investment, for a 7-year total of \$1B. I believe that's money well-spent. We've had more housing growth than any other state. By 2025, we will deliver 36,000 new homes – including at least 12,000 affordable homes. Like most major American cities, DC must always find a way to provide all families a pathway to the middle class.

We are also investing in equitable housing for residents of color. With a \$40 million package of Legacy Initiatives, we can help more Black residents who, right now, are wondering whether they need to move out of DC to afford rent; and how we can support their wealth-building. And we know the best way to do that is through home ownership. We can also help seniors age in place by lowering the cap on property taxes. And by providing legal assistance to families, we can help more Washingtonians pass on their homes to the next generation – keeping families like mine, who have lived here for generations, in Washington, DC.

The pandemic has had lasting effects on our rental housing market, and it is critical we understand these changes and their impacts on our District renters, particularly our low-income renters who rely on affordable housing options. That's why I created the "Saving DC's Rental Housing Market Strike Force," an advisory group that examined the District's preparedness to anticipate changes to the city's affordable and market-rate rental housing market. That group has proposed a thorough list of recommendations, which my administration is considering. One such recommendation is to convene a Commission to re-examine rent stabilization goals, outcomes, and policy recommendations.

Further, my administration has stood up a number of programs providing financial support to tenants and property owners impacted by the COVID-Pandemic. This support has been vital to the District's low-income residents directly affected by unemployment rates due to the pandemic. Our emergency rental assistance programs created in response to the public health emergency have prioritized small landlords in two of the three executed programs.

DHCD continues to prioritize non-housing neighborhood investments in Racial/Ethnic Concentrated Areas of Poverty. DHCD strives to produce affordable-housing opportunities and

targeted neighborhood investments that increase racial and ethnic diversity through the consolidated Notice of Funding Availability. The current NOFA which closes in February included a top Priority Classification for proposed projects located in Rock Creek West, Near Northwest, or Capitol Hill Planning Areas.

One program that deserves particular mention this year is the District of Columbia's Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF). Started as a Pilot in FY21, the HAF program is designed to assist low-income homeowners to catch-up on the costs of homeownership. As laid out in the HAF plan submitted to Treasury, by starting the pilot by assisting condominium owners in some of the hardest hit zip codes in Ward 7 and 8, this program is prioritizing assisting black and brown homeowners. This pilot is already having success in warding off the threat of foreclosure and will soon be making payments to be reinstating these households. The full program, when it is implemented this spring will continue to prioritize the households that have been historically, and are still today, being discriminated against in housing markets.

I am proud of what we have accomplished, but I know too that more must be done to provide affordable rental and home ownership opportunities at all income levels, for all Washingtonians.

- Do you support improving access to housing voucher programs by increasing the number available, as advocated for by The Way Home Campaign and LGBTQ+ Budget Coalition, and reforming program eligibility rules?

Yes. In fact, my administration has already partnered with the DC Housing Authority to target housing vouchers for LGBTQ seniors through the Housing Older People Efficiently, or HOPE program. I welcome an opportunity to expand the program beyond just seniors to help to address an often-hidden problem of homeless, or housing insecure, LGBTQ residents the city.

Workers' Rights

- Do you support enacting legislation decriminalizing sex work for adults, including the selling and purchasing of sex and third party involvement not involving fraud, violence or coercion?

A similar question was asked by GLAA in 2018. I stand by the answer given at that time, which is excerpted below. The issue of commercial sex, sex trafficking, and prostitution in general is highly complicated, generates a lot of emotional responses, and requires careful consideration. My administration is committed to seeking solutions that decrease barriers for individuals engaging in sex work to access services and reduce their exposure to harm. We recognize the need to provide better, safer, and sustainable, long-term options for those engaged in sex work and those seeking to exit the sex trade. My Administration, though, does not support the decriminalization of commercial sex work. This has been my consistent position over the more than 16 years in elected office. My position is rooted in the need to maintain a safety-net to identify and assist victims of commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking and her belief that decriminalization will lead to an increase in sex trafficking. I would support alternatives to incarceration for individuals arrested for soliciting or engaging in sex work. Several other cities have created arrest diversion programs for sex workers that focuses on their personal needs, such as housing, mental and behavioral health treatments, addiction services, and stable employment. Some cities also offer diversion programs to customers that focuses on health, sex education, and learning about exploitation of sex workers.

These are options that merit consideration for the District. But we must ensure a citywide conversation that engages sex workers, advocates, health experts, human trafficking experts, and our residents.

And although human trafficking and decriminalizing sex work should not be conflated, we must also continue to work together to identify and prosecute anyone that is engaged in human trafficking or forcing individuals – especially minors – to engage in sex work without their consent.

- Do you support repealing the subminimum wage for tipped workers?

I will support Initiative 82, if passed by District voters. In 2016, as part of my commitment to create pathways to the middle class for Washingtonians across all eight wards, I signed the Fair Shot Minimum Wage Amendment Act of 2016 into law to raise the District’s minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour by 2020. The wage now stands at \$15.50, which is the amount that tipped workers are entitled to if they do not earn that amount through the subminimum wage + tips. Still, there is a pitched debate about whether the tipped minimum wage works for all tipped workers and to be sure, there is a case to be made on either side. So, while I would prefer an approach to changing the tipped wage that is thoughtful and carefully considered through the legislative process, if Initiative 82 passes, I will support its implementation.

- Do you support funding the Office of Human Rights (OHR) at a level that ensures the agency ends its case backlog, completes discrimination cases in a timely manner, and effectively engages in community education and outreach?

Yes.

Health

- Do you support establishing overdose prevention facilities in the District to reduce deaths from drug overdoses?

Yes. In fact, we have done just that and more. Please see our update to the Live.Long.DC plan, the District’s strategic plan to reduce opioid use, misuse, and related deaths.

- Do you support removing the criminal penalties for drug possession for personal use and increasing investments in health services?

Yes, I support decriminalizing or deprioritizing possession for personal use of some drugs—most notably marijuana. In fact, I have introduced legislation to tax and regulate the sale of marijuana. I am open to understanding the benefit to decriminalizing other drugs, subject of course to a thorough debate and discussion.

Policing and incarceration

- Do you support reducing D.C.’s total pre-COVID-19 incarcerated population by one-third to one-half by FY30?

Our jail population is overwhelmingly comprised of minorities. Reducing the population overall by 30% or more would thus disproportionately remove minorities from incarceration—a goal I

support. Further, incarceration is not always the most appropriate response. When incarceration is necessary, we have a duty to house residents in safe, secure, and humane conditions. That’s why I recently announced \$250M to build a new jail and \$25 million to upgrade the existing one until until it is replaced.

- Do you support better oversight, transparency, and accountability in the process of investigating and improving D.C. jails, including establishing an independent oversight body, addressing issues impacting transgender individuals, repairing jails, and changing staff culture?

Yes.

- Do you support divesting from the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to further invest in vital programs, including anti-poverty, violence prevention, crisis intervention, and reentry?

I don’t believe that investing in violence prevention and crisis intervention programs requires divestment from MPD. I believe we can and should use all available resources to address these critical issues facing our communities. For instance, I recently announced a \$30 million investment in getting MPD back on the path to 4,000 sworn officers. Through investments in hiring, recruitment, and retention, our proposed budget will allow MPD to hire 347 officers in Fiscal Year 2023, including 258 new recruits, 42 residents graduating from the cadet program, and bringing back 47 retired law enforcement officers. This budget does what DC residents all over our city are asking me to do – get our Metropolitan Police Department fully staffed and resourced with the officers they need to keep our community safe. That means getting MPD on the path back to 4,000 sworn officers. As we get back to 4,000 officers, we’re focused on hiring DC residents to be DC police and we’re also focused on hiring more female officers. And our cadet program helps us do both. Combined with our investments in non-police prevention and intervention efforts, and combined with our investments in recreation opportunities for young people, this investment in MPD is going to help us build a safer, stronger DC.”

These investments in MPD are in addition to the \$80 million of non-police violence prevention and intervention efforts included in the Mayor’s budget. These prevention and intervention investments build on the \$59 million Building Blocks investment in FY22, and include programs like a new life coach program that will provide case management services to the approximately 250 individuals in the community who have been identified as being at the highest risk of being involved in gun violence.

We are throwing every resource at the rise in violent crime in DC, and we will keep pushing on all fronts until we see positive results. We will continue to deliver:

COVID has upended so much in our lives, including the very fragile public safety ecosystem in our community. Getting back to normal operations in our courts, jail, parole and probation agencies, and job training programs will also tilt the scale toward safer communities. Know that I wake up every morning focused on the safety of our city and willing to create or expand any program that will make our neighborhoods safer.

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 link relevant documents such as letters to the editor, legislative testimony, campaign literature, etc.

I have been a strong and steady leader for the District these last eight years. I've stood up for the LGBTQ community, I've stood up to President Trump and I've stood for Black Lives Matter. I've kept my promises to create more affordable housing, to throw everything at reducing violent crime, to improve public schools, to create good-paying jobs, to close DC's family homeless shelter, to build a new state-of-the-art hospital east of the River, and to address racial and social inequity. I've fought for DC statehood and gotten us closer than ever before. I've also shown my mettle in leading the District through the COVID-19 pandemic and planning for a comeback.

Here are a just a few of my administration's recent achievements on behalf of the LGBTQ community:

- **Singed into law bill legally protecting LGBT seniors living in long-term care facilities in the District from discrimination and harassment.**
- **Appointed capable, LGBTQ activists to lead the Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Affairs.**
- **Appointed Robert J. Contee III, to become the city's next Chief of Police, who has a long record of understanding and support for LGBTQ-related issues.**
- **When President Trump proposed a rule that allows government and government-supported organizations to object to serving LGBTQ people based on their religion, Mayor Bowser strongly expressed her opposition noting discrimination is fundamentally wrong and goes against everything we stand for in Washington, D.C.**
- **Tackled the issue of violence against D.C.'s LGBTQ community members, by convening a meeting between her office and members of D.C. police's LGBT Liaison Unit and leaders of nongovernment agencies;**
- **In 2021, I declared October as LGBTQ History Month in D.C. to "showcase the fight for dignity and equality for LGBTQ people;"**
- **My administration ensured the Annual 17th Street High Heel Race would endure without the organizational and financial hardships it faced for decades;**
- **One of my first actions when I took office in 2015 was to change the name of the office of GLBT Affairs to the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ Affairs to reflect the direction of the movement.**
- **For a good portion of my first term in office, we worked in partnership with Gay Games DC to showcase the very best DC has to offer. Our bid – one of the top three globally – proved that Washington, DC is strong not simply because we are diverse, but because we celebrate our diversity and inclusion. I would be honored to have the opportunity to continue to share our story in order to bring about equality for our LGBTQ friends globally.**
- **Last summer, we announced that "X," the gender neutral identifier, will be added to driver licenses and identification cards issued by the District of Columbia Department of Motor Vehicles (DC DMV). Currently, applicants must choose between male and female as a gender identifier. The new designation and modified gender designation process aligns District gender identity policies with our shared DC values and recognizes the significance of gender non-binary persons to self-certify their gender preference.**
- **Voted for the marriage equality legislation.**
- **Additionally, in late 2017, I was proud to co-chair the Mayors Against LGBT**

Discrimination - a bipartisan coalition of municipal leaders dedicated to securing inclusive nondiscrimination protections for all, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals, at all levels of government. The group recognizes the special role mayors play in protecting the rights and safety of residents and in advancing policies that move our communities and our country forward. Mayors Against LGBT Discrimination is a program of Freedom for All Americans, the bipartisan campaign to win comprehensive LGBT non-discrimination protections nationwide.

- **We partnered with the Whitman-Walker Clinic to open a 118,000 square foot health care facility at the St. Elizabeths East Campus. This expansion will significantly improve access to care for DC residents who live east of the Anacostia River as we focus on persistent health disparities and service delivery inequities in Ward 8.**
- **Our Transgender pathways project is a training program through the Department of Health for transgender and gender non-conforming employment readiness program that builds technical skills for future employment opportunities. Participants can start at any computer skill level and move up with the help of hands-on learning, career-building skills, and coaching to achieve their goals.**

But we know that the LGBTQ community cares deeply about issues that affect all DC residents. Here are a few notable accomplishments:

- **When President Trump attacked us with rubber bullets and tear gas, we responded with a clear message painted in yellow letters 48-foot-wide: BLACK LIVES MATTER.**
- **This summer, we announced a \$400 million subsidy for affordable housing, the largest ever of its kind. Since taking office, we have invested more than a billion dollars in the Housing Production Trust Fund. And, since 2019, we have made progress toward her goal of delivering 36,000 new homes – including at least 12,000 affordable homes – by 2025.**
- **In 2014, we committed to create for every child a seat in a quality school—no matter her zip code or her parent’s tax bracket. We’ve made a lot of progress since then. DCPS continued to be the fastest improving urban school district. Public school enrollment grew for 11 consecutive years. My administration invested billions in new facilities and hers was the first to open hybrid learning last year, and this year every DCPS school is open 5 days a week.**
- **Tripled the government procurement spend with District-based small businesses since 2015. Last year, for the very first time in District history, we spent more than \$1 billion with DC small businesses.**
- **Expanded the Mayor Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program to serve residents up to age 24; Expanded MPD Police Cadet Corps for DC High School graduates.**
- **In 2016, as part of her commitment to create pathways to the middle class for Washingtonians across all eight wards, we signed the Fair Shot Minimum Wage Amendment Act of 2016 into law to raise the District’s minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour by 2020. The wage now stands at \$15.50.**
- **When she first ran for Mayor, I promised to close unsafe, overcrowded shelter facilities like DC General, and to improve homeless services. And that’s just what she did. DC General was demolished in 2018. This year we opened our 7th, brand new, service-enriched family shelter. The average shelter stay has been reduced to 90 days. Veteran homelessness is down 61%. Family homelessness is down 73%.**
- **We broke ground on the new Cedar Hill Regional Medical Center. The \$375 million project includes a state-of-the-art 136-bed, full-service hospital, ambulatory pavilion for physician**

offices, clinics and community space, a 500-car garage, and a helipad for emergency transports. The first new hospital in over 20 years, the project is subject to the District's Certified Business Enterprise, First Source, Project Labor, Davis Bacon and Green Building requirements.

- **Since taking office as Mayor, I have steadfastly advocated for the District to become the 51st state. I've testified before Congress twice and we have gotten a statehood bill closer to becoming law than ever before. Her testimony each time has been blunt: our Congresswoman doesn't have a final vote, and we do not have two senators to speak for us in matters of war and peace and in matters about the Supreme Court. Without statehood, our voices are silenced. Denying District residents a say on federal issues is akin to denying permanent residents a vote in local elections. That is anti-democratic, and it's un-American. Statehood will reinforce and advance our ability to weigh in on issues affecting organized Labor.**
- **In March 2020, we moved quickly to combat the virus. We acted decisively to keep District residents safe and our economy operational. We turned firehouses into testing sites and built a free testing system that is second to none. We consulted with the Centers for Disease Control, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the White House, renowned universities, and other experts. She hosted weekly and sometimes daily press conferences to keep the public abreast of new information about the disease and how we were attacking it. We made decisions based on the science and always through an equity lens.**
- **My administration deployed hundreds of millions of dollars to keep Washingtonians in their homes.**
- **My administration implemented a mask mandate as a part of a layered mitigation strategy to help stop the spread of COVID-19 to keep our frontline workers safe.**
- **We opened streateries to keep restaurants open and their staff working in safe settings**
- **We vaccines for our educators and were the first public school system in the region to return to in-person learning.**
- **The ReOpen DC Advisory Committee sought and accepted advice and insight from all corners of the economy, including from members of the LGBTQ community, to ensure that the economic recovery was safe.**
- **We required DC government employees and contractors to be vaccinated for their own safety, for the safety of those they work with and serve, and to lead by example.**
- **We stood up and administered millions of doses of vaccines and we continue to do so.**
- **We opened COVID Centers in each ward so that individuals have access to vaccinations, boosters, take-home rapid antigen tests, and PCR tests near to where they live and work.**
- **We implemented a vaccine entry requirement to protect frontline workers from exposure to COVID. Vaccine requirements have resulted in more persons who were vaccine hesitant deciding to get vaccinated, thereby providing protection to themselves, those with whom they come in contact, and helping to maintain hospital capacity.**