

**Leave No One Behind**

**2022 GLAA Questionnaire**

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

**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?

I strongly support providing sufficient affordable housing units at the 30% AMI level. Indeed, I led the Lisner Home on Western Avenue to secure the first ever Housing Production Trust Fund grant in Ward 3 to build 93 units on deeply affordable senior housing. See [here](https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/02/02/new-affordable-housing-hptf-ward-3/). The project will include 50% of the units at 30% AMI and 50% at 50% AMI. Similarly, I have been a leader in the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN) efforts in Ward 3 to promote the addition of affordable housing in the area. See [here](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/local-opinions/upper-northwest-dc-segregation-rock-creek-west/2021/04/01/2360ec8c-915c-11eb-a74e-1f4cf89fd948_story.html) and [here](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/18/friendship-heights-has-chance-begin-rectify-its-racist-past/). I also think it is a priority to deliver workforce affordable housing. The bottom line is that we need to increase our affordable housing stock considerably and 30% AMI housing must be a significant fraction of the new affordable housing delivered.

* 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?

I support the voucher program in principle but have been troubled by its implementation in practice. “Housing First” denotes something will follow. To date, the city has done a poor job of following up and supporting voucher residents which is a disservice to those residents and the existing residents in the buildings. Meanwhile, information about the program has been opaque at best. Deputy Mayor Geldart recently acknowledged these failings at a recent ANC 3F meeting. See [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVA6QC_JIqw) at 1:17 to 1:23. There is a significant need that can and should be addressed through the voucher program, but the city has to get its house in order ensuring serious follow up to support residents and real transparency about what is working and what is not for the program to be successful and sustainable.

**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?

Our current set of laws on prostitution clearly are a failure. I have not been on the front lines of this issue other than as an observer when the issue was raised in 2019 (see [here](https://lims.dccouncil.us/downloads/LIMS/42712/Introduction/B23-0318-Introduction.pdf)) and ended up being derailed really with only four Councilmembers supporting it when it could require nine to overcome a veto. See [here](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-politics/dc-effort-to-decriminalize-sex-work-wont-move-forward-after-tense-14-hour-hearing/2019/11/16/b7c77358-06ef-11ea-ac12-3325d49eacaa_story.html). At the time, after the Council was inundated with messages from activists, the Bill’s chief sponsor suggested that the issue should be taken to the ballot box. I think that is a good idea. When I asked my wife about the issue, she very matter-of-factly said one way or another sex work was going to happen and it might as well be regulated. I suspect that there could be broad support for that perspective, but if it is foisted on the public bay a narrow majority or even a solid one by the Council, I fear any proposed solution would not be durable. Meanwhile, a major debate in the context of a referendum could shine useful light on serious issues and have a benefit in and of itself.

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

Yes. This was a good idea when proposed by referendum and passed by the public. Thew Council reversal of the referendum result was regrettable, to say the least, from multiple perspectives.

* 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. If we set up an office to fill a need, we must fund it to fulfill its mandate. Otherwise opening the office is just for show.

**Health**

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

Yes. This is a very serious issue, taking many lives, particularly among older African American men. See [here](https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/02/07/opioid-fentanyl-addiction-narcan-racism-health-equity-gun-violence-dc/). And, it is fixable if we are serious about it.

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

Yes. The drug war is a failure.

**Policing and incarceration**

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

I certainly support this as a goal. But just as I am reluctant to commit to a need for a certain number of police in 2030 when we know that we hope and intend to make significant changes in how we police, the mix of tasks we will ask our police to undertake, increase violence interruption programs and change the culture of the relationship between the police and communities. And, ideally we would ramp up programs to address the root causes of crime. It is my hope that once we make all of those changes we will need fewer police, but we do not know for sure. Similarly, inters of incarceration, we need to reverse the trauma of mass incarceration so we need to help people get out and then support them once they are out so they do not get pulled back in to a lifestyle that could land them back in prison. But today, we do not know what conditions will be in 2030. What I can say is that if our incarcerated population has declined by one-third to one-half by FY30, we will have succeeded on many fronts, and if we have not, we will have failed on some or all of those fronts.

* 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. The operation of the DC Jail has been a longstanding travesty. See [here](https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/02/15/dc-jail-covid-settlement/). It is tragic that it took complaints from January 6th protesters to bring increased attention to the issues. See [here](https://time.com/6137882/dc-jail-conditions-january-6/). Meanwhile, our residents often are sent around the country to serve time, far from their families. If one wanted to map out a path to maximize recidivism, it would be the path we are on. We need to be lowering our incarcerated population and working to ensure that once returned to society our returning citizens can succeed.

* 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?

100%. We will never incarcerate our way to safety. To get to a just, safe community, we need to seriously attack the root causes of much crime – lack of hope and opportunity. Where beefs are emerging that can lead to spirals of violence, we need skilled people – violence interrupters – to defuse conflicts. We need to change the relationship between the police and communities so there can be trust and better information sharing. And where our citizens are incarcerated, we need to work to give them a chance upon their return, for their sake and ours. As indicated above, lack of hope and opportunity lay at the root of much crime. Returning citizens, whom often have been away from their families for years, are particularly vulnerable to such a slide and yet we seem to do all we can to make life harder for them and push them into recidivism. Ewe need to give them a chance.

*Please return your questionnaire responses in PDF format* ***by 11:59pm ET on Friday, April 22*** [*here*](https://forms.gle/BY2LdSwFxyURMwRN8)*. If you have trouble submitting your response through the form, you can email it to equal@glaa.org. GLAA will rate each response at our meeting on April 26 at 7pm ET.*