

**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?

Yes. Throughout my campaign, I have stressed that the city’s affordable housing investments must focus on “deeply affordable housing,” which for me means serving households with incomes below 30% of AMI. Status quo policies have encouraged displacement by building blindly with no regard for what type of units we build. DC’s “affordable” definition often requires units to be affordable for no more than 40 years and can often mean 80% of the median income, which works out to over $100,000 for a family of four in DC, more than twice the median income for DC’s Black households. We need to start being intentional about what we build to make sure we take care of those who need stability and security: our seniors, our LGBTQ+ youth, our returning citizens, and our low-income families who work hard but can never find affordable homes that fit their needs.

I support increased investments in deeply affordable housing – including using public land and vacant properties to develop permanently and deeply affordable housing through community land trusts and limited equity co-ops, increasing our allocation to the Housing Production Trust Fund, LRSP, prioritizing preserving our existing stock of affordable housing, and more. And we need to replenish the STAY DC program with additional funding for eviction prevention that is easy to access.

* 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. While the District has done a lot in recent years to build housing through the Trust Fund and to address homelessness with permanent supportive housing, the biggest gap in DC’s affordable housing response has been the limited investment in vouchers, which is the main tool to help those with the lowest incomes. This year, for example, the proposed FY2023 budget has no funding for vouchers to help the 40,000 households on the DCHA waiting list (which has been closed for nearly a decade). As a Council member, I will make it a top priority to fund the thousands of LRSP vouchers needed to stop displacement of Black residents. I will use the Council’s oversight powers to hold DCHA accountable for getting funded vouchers into use quickly and without imposing barriers on recipients. And I will take steps to stop the widespread landlord discrimination against residents trying to use vouchers.

**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?

Yes. Criminalizing sex work doesn’t stop it, but instead victimizes those trying to survive, a disproportionate share of whom in DC are trans women of color. In listening to sex workers themselves, I have come to understand that they will be safest when sex work is decriminalized for both the seller and the buyer.

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

Yes. I believe we must follow a “Black Women Best” approach to economic policy. If we design economic policy in ways that uplift Black women – who are among the most marginalized workers – then we will build an economy that we know works for everyone. That must include raising wages for tipped workers, so that they receive the full minimum wage (one fair wage) plus tips. Tipping’s history comes from white employers who did not want to pay fair wages to Black workers. Black women are disproportionately represented as servers in restaurants, and servers on average have very low wages and above-average poverty rates. Having to rely on tips for most of their income puts these workers at risk financially and physically (tipped workers face challenges resisting abuse from customers), and Black women servers earn the lowest tips on average.

* 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. Underfunding at the Office of Human Rights (OHR) is causing long delays in investigating discrimination cases. OHR is missing statutory deadlines and prolonging the trauma of victimized DC residents.

OHR also needs funding to ensure that DC residents understand their human rights. It needs more staff for outreach and education to meet people where they are.

**Health**

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

Yes. I believe we must decriminalize poverty-related behaviors that would be more effectively addressed through a public health approach, like addiction, adult drug use, mental health crises, sex work, and homelessness. Overdose prevention facilities have proven very effective at saving lives. Without such facilities, and with the criminalization of drug use, overdoses happen because drugs are used in the shadows and in unsafe conditions.

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

Yes. My answer above also applies here.

**Policing and incarceration**

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

Yes. I support the recommendations of the Jails and Justice Task Force to work toward a goal of greatly reducing the number of DC residents who are incarcerated. I will work with colleagues to act on the Police Reform Commission’s recommendations while advancing key [preventive measures](https://www.zacharyforward5.com/violence-prevention) to reduce the over-policing and mass incarceration of Black and brown residents. I will, among other things, work to end mandatory minimums, decriminalize behaviors that instead should be addressed through a public health approach, and expand the types of low-level offenses that are eligible for “field arrests,” when an officer issues a citation rather than taking the person to booking and jail.

* 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 conditions at the DC Jail have been shockingly inhumane for years, and recent behavior of the jail’s leadership – including extreme use of solitary confinement and not allowing transgender incarcerated people to be housed based on their gender identity – is unacceptable. As a Councilmember, I will support more vigorous oversight of the jail, including supporting legislation and oversight to end abusive treatment and ineffective punishment, while working to build a new model of criminal justice rooted in rehabilitation.

* 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 support the recommendations of the Police Reform Commission to decenter the role of policing in our approach to public safety. Violence and accountability are huge concerns for our community, and our city must be urgent in doing more of the targeted solutions we know will work if we actually commit to funding and implementing them.

We must ask the *right* questions to make informed choices. Violence is on the rise across the country (even in jurisdictions that have not seen a reduction in the police force) during a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. That says to me that the recent rise in violent incidents like homicide and carjackings in DC is likely linked to a widening wealth gap, mental health strains due to the pandemic, lack of supports for families, continued disinvestment in schools and communities, and the policy choices that keep low-income communities across the country stuck in cycles of trauma, poverty, and violence. In the end, we build healthy communities by providing communities with resources and infrastructure: healthy food, clean water, permanently affordable housing, and mental health services.

We need to focus the police more effectively and efficiently. Police should prioritize enforcing and responding to violence, and move away from the myriad of duties they perform that are better suited for others, such as behavioral health crises, social work, and traffic enforcement. We need to use data and meaningful community outreach to find the tensions in communities and proactively de-escalate the situations.

*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.*