

**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. Mayor Bowser has promised to increase affordable housing in our city but we have seen over the last eight years that her focus has not been on those in our city with the highest barriers to housing - people earning less than 30% of AMI. One of the best tools our city has to solve our affordable housing crisis for people with the most limited resources is the Housing Production Trust Fund but, under Mayor Bowser’s lead, this resource has been egregiously misused. [Mayor Bowser oversaw the misuse of nearly $82 million meant to provide housing to the households earning less than 30% of AMI.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2021/10/01/dc-inspector-general-affordable-housing/) This is unacceptable incompetence and is evidence of the Mayor’s priorities when it comes to affordable housing.

As Mayor, I will follow the law and ensure every dollar of the Housing Production Trust Fund is used as the law requires so that we actually help the people who need it most. In addition, I will [prioritize using public lands to maximize the amount of deeply affordable housing](https://washingtoncitypaper.com/article/550184/candidates-like-robert-white-want-to-change-how-d-c-develops-public-land-could-it-make-a-difference-to-the-housing-crisis/) we can create, implement social housing, and expand the use of affordability covenants, [a plan I have pioneered in which the government subsidizes housing units and caps the cost of rent](https://www.robertwhiteatlarge.com/new-housing-bill-takes-quick-proactive-approach-to-affordable-housing-2/). I am open to any proposal that will increase housing for the people in our city who need it the most.

* 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. We need to expand support so that people with limited incomes are able to stay in our city. We have thousands of people on the waitlist for vouchers and the Mayor has continued to underfund the program. [She opposed modest tax increases on millionaires meant to fund vouchers that would keep people housed in our city.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-politics/bowser-council-tax-hike-veto/2021/07/26/dcc2049a-eb02-11eb-8950-d73b3e93ff7f_story.html) [I was proud to vote in favor of this legislation.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-politics/dc-council-tax-increase-budget/2021/07/20/36f483d4-e8e7-11eb-97a0-a09d10181e36_story.html) In contrast, I will lead a 200% increase in rental vouchers to prevent displacement and support our residents. [On the Council, I have pulled money from other agencies to find vouchers, including some for LGBTQ seniors and some for LGBTQ youth.](https://www.robertwhiteatlarge.com/equity-and-social-justice-issues-funded-in-dc-councils-fy2022-budget/)

**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. Prosecuting and incarcerating people who are put in positions where they are forced to sell sex either from economic necessity or exploitation is not productive or humane. There is an overwhelming number of LGBT sex workers because of discrimination and abandonment from families, job discrimination, housing discrimination, social discrimination, and resulting mental health and substance abuse issues. Those who are forced into sex work should not be punished but rather given the support and services they need. I believe that it is incumbent upon those who would lead and serve to address the real conditions and circumstances of our citizens, and people generally, at the margins. Where we find desperation, our system should support those in need, not cause greater suffering and do greater long-term harm.

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

Yes. I support Initiative 82 which, when passed, will end the lower tipped minimum wage. [I was pleased to speak with supporters of I-82 and express my support for the initiative.](https://mobile.twitter.com/bttrrstrntsdc/status/1491195665623388169) I opposed overturning the ballot measure to repeal the subminimum wage for tipped workers after District residents voted in favor of it. The Council should not repeal referendums unless under extreme circumstances, and this was not one.

* 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?

As the Chair of the Committee on Government Operations & Facilities I have oversight of the Office of Human Rights. In the last few years OHR has gotten massive budget and personnel increases. What the agency needs now is strong, steady leadership. The interim director has already been fixing many of the agency’s long-standing issues. I have provided consistent oversight to stabilize the agency. As mayor, I will make sure we have experienced leaders across the agency who are focused on closing the case backlog and protecting residents.

You can find the full transcript of the 2022 OHR budget oversight hearing [here](http://dc.granicus.com/TranscriptViewer.php?view_id=53&clip_id=7290).

**Health**

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

Yes. DC can follow the lead of other jurisdictions and establish safe injection sites (also known as overdose prevention sites). Instead of stigmatizing people who use drugs, these sites provide a safe place to receive sterile needles, connect with treatment options, and receive overdose prevention if necessary. These sites should also have testing capabilities to determine if substances contain fentanyl, which is responsible for a significant share of overdoses in DC. DC also needs to continue to expand our program providing Narcan (also known as Naloxone) and training to shelters to help respond to overdoses quickly and save lives. [This is a key plank of my public safety plan which you can read in its entirety here.](https://robertfordc.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/robert-white-public-safety-2-1-2022.pdf)

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

Yes. DC needs to reimagine our response to drug use. That starts with decriminalizing drug possession so that people who use drugs are not discouraged from seeking help. We should respond to addiction like any other illness: with treatment, not punishment. Incarcerating people for addiction costs substantially more than treatment while also separating and traumatizing families, and doing nothing to solve the underlying problem. Between 2015 and 2018, an estimated 16,000 to 24,000 adults in the District who needed treatment for illicit drug use did not receive it. Law enforcement’s primary responsibility when dealing with cases of drug misuse should be to get the person counseling, Medication Assisted Treatment, or other help. [This is a key plank of my public safety plan which you can read in its entirety here.](https://robertfordc.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/robert-white-public-safety-2-1-2022.pdf)

**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. Where appropriate, DC should create more alternatives to incarceration for those instances where both the individual and the community would be better served by referral to mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, or other rehabilitative services. [DC’s Alternatives to the Court Experience (ACE) Diversion program](https://oag.dc.gov/public-safety/juvenile-diversion-program) has had great success doing this in the juvenile justice system and we can bring the same success to the criminal justice space.

One alternative to incarceration is restorative justice, a practice in which survivors and perpetrators of crime come together to discuss the harm committed and where victims are centered in determining what needs to occur to remedy the harm. The DC Office of the Attorney General has had great success implementing restorative justice practices with young people. DC should increase investment in these programs and expand them to other appropriate arenas.

The trauma that communities experience when their loved ones are incarcerated cannot be overstated. We can reduce this trauma not just by investing in crime prevention, but by expanding alternatives to incarceration and not relying on excessively long sentences. Our goals in seeking accountability should not exclusively be punishment, but making communities safer by reducing the chances of recidivism. [This is a key plank of my public safety plan which you can read in its entirety here.](https://robertfordc.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/robert-white-public-safety-2-1-2022.pdf)

* 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. I have been incredibly outspoken about improving the oversight of and conditions within DC Jail. [This is a personal issue for me.](https://washingtoncitypaper.com/article/183048/family-ties-inspire-robert-whites-policies-helping-returning-citizens/) When I was in law school, my brother was incarcerated in DC Jail and I was deeply disturbed by the conditions I saw when I visited him. I decided then that if I was ever in a position where I could help people incarcerated in DC Jail and returning citizens, I would do everything I could. [One of my priorities in office has been to call out the deplorable conditions in DC Jail](https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Councilmember-Robert-White-s-Statement-on-the-DC-Jail-and-Returning-Citizens.html?soid=1126878209723&aid=8RLCGMpaLpQ) and [one of the planks of my public safety plan is to increase oversight over DOC so that DC Jail provides safe, humane, and dignified treatment of the people in its care.](https://robertfordc.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/robert-white-public-safety-2-1-2022.pdf) [I advocated for funding to construct a new building for DC Jail](https://www.robertwhiteatlarge.com/councilmember-robert-white-calls-on-mayor-to-secure-funding-for-a-new-dc-jail-in-fiscal-year-2023-budget/). This new building can’t just be a different space with the same culture. We need facilities that promote education, workforce training, reentry, and rehabilitation programs.

In addition, I have been an advocate for the transgender community and have led efforts to [increase data collection on health disparities for the LGBTQ+ community](https://lims.dccouncil.us/Legislation/B22-0840) and [establish a study of unemployment discrimination against the trans and nonbinary community in DC government](https://code.dccouncil.us/us/dc/council/code/sections/1-607.62.html). As Mayor, I will continue to push for oversight and accountability for DC Jail and ensure that all people, especially transgender people who are often most at risk, are given the care and dignity they deserve.

* 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?

Our only response to crime cannot be police. We need to dramatically increase our investments in violence prevention, violence interruptions and combatting recidivism by supporting returning citizens, [all of which are fundamental to my proposed public safety plan](https://robertfordc.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/robert-white-public-safety-2-1-2022.pdf). Police respond to crime but we need to be focused on preventing crime. Police can’t be a catchall for every problem – they need to be focused on keeping people safe by preventing and responding to violence. At the same time, we need a fully resourced and staffed police force to respond to and investigate crime. The mayor is proposing increasing the size of the force, without first determining what the appropriate size for the police force is, [as was called for by the Police Reform Commission report.](https://dccouncil.us/police-reform-commission-full-report/) That is irresponsible. I will conduct a thorough audit to determine the appropriate size of MPD as well as remove the non-public safety related responsibilities from MPD’s jurisdiction.