



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. When responding to our questionnaire, please include specific examples of how your previous record demonstrates your commitment to the issues raised in the questionnaire. 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. I support the effort to provide sufficient affordable housing across income levels. Deeply affordable housing for our neighbors living at the lowest-income levels must be prioritized. To achieve this goal, we must leverage all the tools available to the government to ensure housing at all income levels. My record on the Council demonstrates a long-standing commitment to this project. I authored legislation, and worked directly with Chairman Mendelson and then-Mayor Gray to incorporate it into the budget, directing half of the annual District surplus to the Housing Production Trust Fund; I authorized legislation, passed unanimously by the Council, to establish affordable housing set-aside requirements when District-owned land is being disposed of for the development of multi-family residential projects; and I have co-introduced legislation to make funding decisions by the Housing Production Trust Fund more transparent so that we can ensure the Fund is maximizing the number of affordable units created with government resources.

In addition to the policies outlined in the prompt, I also know that most low-income tenants arrive at housing court without an attorney or zealous advocate when they are faced with an eviction. This specifically speaks to the challenge residents face when attempting to hold onto affordable housing once they have identified it. Before Council action, landlords would come to housing court 90% of the time with a lawyer while

tenants are represented in less than 10% of cases. This puts tenants at an incredible disadvantage. That's why I authored the *Expanding Access to Justice Act* and created the "Civil Gideon" program, which provides low-income residents with free legal representation in landlord-tenant court. This demonstrates my willingness to use new and aggressive approaches to assist residents to keep affordable housing. This program is fully funded.

As At-Large Councilmember, I will continue to find creative ways to address the District's housing needs.

- **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—I support improving access to housing voucher programs and believe that everyone deserves to live in safe, quality housing that they can afford. The primary tool used by the District to build low-income housing is the Housing Production Trust Fund. As described above, I have long worked to increase funding for the Housing Production Trust Fund and improve its operations. However, investment in the development of affordable housing must be paired with rental assistance programs to keep rent affordable for tenants. The Executive has taken strides to increase the amount of funding set aside for project-based Local Rent Supplement Programs, but we must do more and do it with a greater sense of urgency. I am committed to working with my colleagues on the Council to provide additional investment in LSRPs, including voucher assistance for families who seek housing on the private market, as well as project-based vouchers. The District's approach to affordable housing requires variety and solutions are often layered behind the last barriers to housing we (the government) remove. This impacts my policy and decision-making approach because I deeply appreciate the nuances of affordable housing and that residents expect me to be nimble and ready to tackle the barriers as they become apparent. This means appreciating that one policy effort will not alone eradicate homelessness or stabilize the housing market in the District. However, I have a demonstrated track record of delivering results that have and will continue to produce more units of deeply affordable housing.

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?**

Several years ago, a bill was introduced in the Council that would have made changes to District law regarding sex work. At that time, I committed to working with my colleagues to review and consider the legislation. Unfortunately, the bill did not have a hearing and has since expired. Should similar legislation be introduced again, I maintain my commitment to work with colleagues to thoroughly review it. I do believe that any bill the Council supports must pay considerable attention to the impact such legislation would

have on the prevalence of sex trafficking, which is a very real problem that poses an immediate danger to public health and safety.

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

It is imperative that tipped workers are paid fairly and protected from wage theft, and I have fought to ensure that tipped workers know their rights and that employers who steal from workers are held accountable through recovery by the Office of Wage-Hour compliance or legal action by the DC Office of the Attorney General.

Initiative 82 will be on the November General Election ballot and voters will decide this issue. If it passes, as At-Large Councilmember, I would not vote to overturn it. At the same time, I would encourage voters to talk both to tipped workers and small business owners to consider fully the economic impacts that repealing the tipped minimum wage would have on our local economy as we continue our efforts to recover equitably from the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Far too many of our local restaurants and retailers closed as a result of the pandemic and many that remain continue to struggle. The loss of more of these local small businesses would further harm the workers and communities which they serve and significantly threaten the District's overall economy.

- **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. The Office of Human Rights provides invaluable services and protections to District residents, and I believe it must be sufficiently funded to ensure that it can continue to do so in a timely and effective manner. I have worked with OHR on anti-discrimination bills I have authored and ushered through the Council, including "ban-the-box" for housing and the amendment that put teeth into our local "ban-the-box" employment law. As a former trial attorney within the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice under President Obama, I fully appreciate the OHR's mission and the need for additional support for the agency to execute its critically important charge.

Health

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

Yes, I certainly believe this approach is worthy of exploration and serious funding when the policy and plan crystalize. As an advocate for a public health approach to violence prevention, I believe this is the correct way to address the devastating impact of overdoses. Further, more than one person a day dies from an opioid-related overdose in our city. That is why I fully support the city's "Long. Live. DC." campaign to end the city's opioid epidemic and why, this summer, I stood with DBH Director Bazron at

Chuck Brown Day in Ward 5 as she urged the crowd to get naloxone and fentanyl test strips to help prevent opioid overdoses.

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

Yes, I believe in a public health approach to addressing addiction and am certainly open to evidenced-based, data-driven solutions to address the impact of drugs on our society rather than simply criminalizing adults who possess small amounts of drugs for personal use.

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, so long as it is done thoughtfully and with the necessary local resources and supports to aid formerly incarcerated individuals' successful reintegration into the community. The Nation's overreliance on mass incarceration has devastated communities and condemned generations of Americans, disproportionately Black and brown people, to life as second-class citizens. As the GLAA 2022 DC LGBTQ Election Guide so succinctly describes, the District is not an exception; in fact, we have one of the highest incarceration rates in the country. The collateral consequences resulting from incarceration impact not only the incarcerated individual but spread like a virus throughout whole families and communities. These impacts continue to be felt long after an individual's incarceration ends, in the form of restrictive probation, parole, and the lifelong collateral consequences of living with criminal records.

The deplorable conditions to which individuals housed in the District jail are subject only exacerbate the issue. The recent US Marshals Service inspection uncovered the inhumane and unsanitary conditions at the DC jail, bringing national attention and embarrassment to the District.

I have devoted much of my public service career to reforming the District's justice system. As Chairperson of the Council's Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary, I authored, passed, and funded the Neighborhood Engagement Achieves Results (NEAR) Act, to establish a comprehensive, public-health-based approach to public safety. The purpose of the NEAR Act is to put in place systems and services to reduce violence and crime before it happens, thereby reducing the need for police intervention and incarceration levels. I have also successfully passed comprehensive juvenile justice reforms that ended the use of solitary confinement, life sentences, and indiscriminate shackling of juveniles in Court. To address the barriers to successful reentry faced by formerly incarcerated people, I have introduced legislation during the past two Council periods to reform the District's complicated and unjust record sealing process. I am committed to continuing the work of criminal justice reform.

- **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. As previously mentioned, the recent US Marshals Service brought national attention and embarrassment to the District when it uncovered the inhumane and unsanitary conditions to which individuals housed in DC Jails are subject. Yet, even after the national attention and outcry, it is difficult to say whether conditions have improved; seven people have died in DC jail custody this year. I support efforts to provide better oversight over and accountability for the DC jails. As an advisor to the late Paul Quander, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice during the Gray administration, I worked to reconstitute the Corrections Information Council (CIC), an entity that must have more independence to be more effective. My work on the CIC was informed by my tenure at the US DOJ, where, among other duties, I worked with corrections experts to enforce the federal Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (CRIPA), protecting the rights of people in state and local prisons and jails around the country.

- **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 have long advocated for a holistic, public health-based approach to public safety that reduces over-reliance on police intervention and requires investment in programs to address the root causes of violence. I have sought to achieve public safety in a meaningful way that prioritizes accountability and opportunity. No crime, especially a violent crime, should go without the offender being held accountable. In addition to accountability, I will continue to focus on closing the opportunity gap that exists for too many marginalized youths living in poverty. Exposing them to opportunities will help prevent violence from happening in the first place and help address the culture of violence that is too prevalent in our city. To change this culture, we must prioritize accountability and opportunity and make more community investments that create real economic pathways and futures for residents of our city, instead of perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

As Chairperson of the Council's Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary, I authored, passed, and funded the NEAR Act. The purpose of the NEAR Act is to employ a public-health-based approach to reducing violence by identifying and addressing the root causes of crime. Examples include the creation of the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement and the establishment of a violence interruption model. Elements of the NEAR Act also seek to reduce reliance on police intervention by pairing MDP with mental health professionals when responding to calls involving individuals dealing with a mental health crisis. I will continue to fight for full funding and faithful implementation of the NEAR Act.

In terms of police accountability, the NEAR Act also requires MPD to provide data on its use of stop and frisk and use of force, as well as other crime data. Additionally, I authored legislation incorporated into the Council's Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform legislation to limit police use of force and deadly force.

To address the barriers to successful reentry faced by formerly incarcerated people, I have introduced legislation during the past two Council periods to reform the District's complicated and unjust record sealing process.

During my tenure on the Council, I have also consistently pushed for increased funding for job-training programs and have worked to find creative solutions to provide economic opportunity and stability for the most disenfranchised residents, who are often most vulnerable to becoming victims and perpetrators of crime. Last year, I authored, passed, and funded the Child Wealth Building Act, which will create child trust accounts for children born to low-income households. These funds can be used for education, business ownership, real estate, and other investments. I have also authored legislation, and incorporated into the District budget, to provide funding for cash assistance pilot programs that provide unrestricted cash benefits to low-income individuals. And most recently, I passed and funded the Clean Hands Certification Equity Amendment Act, so that individuals who cannot afford to pay traffic-related fines and fees are still able to obtain or renew their drivers' license, ensuring their continued ability to get to work and take their children to school. Efforts like these, which provide economic opportunity and stability, are essential to successful efforts at reducing crime by addressing its root causes.

*Please return your questionnaire responses in Word format **by 11:59pm ET on Tuesday, September 20** [here](#). If you have trouble submitting your response through the form, you can email it to equal@glaa.org.*