

A Loving Community

2024 GLAA Questionnaire

Candidate: Rodney Red Grant for DC City Council At-Large

Date: April 19, 2024

The following questions are based on A Loving Community: GLAA Policy Brief 2024. If you have questions about the issues raised in the questionnaire, please seek the brief for guidance and clarification.

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—particularly actions that relate to the topics in recent GLAA policy briefs.

Feel free to link relevant documents such as letters to the editor, legislative testimony, campaign literature, etc. Assume that GLAA is unfamiliar with your record.

1. Fund Our Futures. Do you support addressing concentrated wealth in the District by raising revenue through taxing the most wealthy residents as the Just Recovery DC Coalition recommends in its Fair Tax proposal?

Yes – For far too long there have been unequal tax burdens placed on different communities based on race and class. It is time that everyone pays their fair share. On the Council I will be a zealous advocate for real income equality; including raising taxes on the wealthy to a level commiserate with everyone else.

2. Invest in harm reduction and overdose prevention services to save lives. Do you support funding the evidence-based and patient-centered approach to reducing overdose deaths and supporting healing from substance use disorder in the form of allocating \$15 million from the \$80 million Opioid Settlement Fund to fund two 24/7 harm reduction centers, that would include a safe drug consumption component, mobile outreach vehicles, and drug checking services?

Yes – I start with the science. A comprehensive approach to combating overdoses necessitates harm reduction techniques. I support the wide availability of free drug tests, harm reduction centers, and free drug counseling services to help those who are ready to quit find the support they need.

3. Increasing the pipeline of licensed mental health care workers. Do you support addressing the District's lack of mental health providers by reducing the barriers to becoming a licensed social worker through ending the exam requirement for people who complete a Bachelor's or Master's degree in social work and funding programs such as the recently passed law creating a free Master of Social Work program?

Yes – we are in crisis and the time to shore up our mental health capabilities is now. Diploma privilege for those who have completed licensed social work programs will ensure those who have spent years honing their skills will become immediately available for the public good. I also am committed to fighting for funding during the Council’s yearly budget battles to make sure we fund programs that will get more prospective social workers the education they need to help our community.

4. Fund crisis response and community-based behavioral/mental health services to prevent crises. Do you support investing in unarmed models of crisis response with responders that are culturally competent and resourced sufficiently to respond in minutes?

Yes – this is about using the right tool for the job. Sending armed officers into situations that require mental health aid is actively harmful and puts the entire community at risk. I support funding the training of community-based mental health service providers who can defuse situations instead of perpetuating a cycle of violence.

5. Budget sufficiently to fulfill non-discrimination laws. Do you support continued funding for the Office of Human Rights (and oppose cuts to the agency’s budget) to ensure the agency can staff up sufficiently to end its case backlog, complete discrimination cases in a timely manner, and effectively engage in community education and outreach?

Yes – everyone deserves a fair shot in the District. Our non-discrimination laws exist for a reason and they are only as good as our ability to enforce them. I support working with the Office of Human Rights and the Attorney General to ensure that discrimination issues are addressed head-on and quickly.

6. Decriminalize Sex Work. Do you support enacting legislation to decriminalize sex work for adults, including the selling and purchasing of sex and third party involvement not involving fraud, violence or coercion?

Yes – It is high time that the government removes itself from the regulation of people’s bodies. A well-regulated sex industry, rather, ensures the safety of all of those who participate.

7. Decriminalize Drug Use. Do you support removing the criminal penalties for drug possession for personal use and increasing investments in health services?

Yes – An important part of the work of remaking communities brutalized by mass incarceration and drug abuse includes providing access to health services that will enable those trapped in a cycle of addiction to break free. DC will not follow the failed approach of Washington State in their decriminalization strategy which has created a morasse of addiction. We hold ourselves responsible to follow up decriminalization with the social services required for those seeking freedom from drugs. We call on MPD to take aggressive action in actively pursuing drug traffickers releasing fentanyl-tainted substances into our community.

8. Fully implement police and jail oversight and record sealing legislation. Do you support the full \$2.6 million in funding necessary to implement the legislation passed to improve oversight of our jails and police and to overhaul our criminal record sealing process?

Yes – Police accountability is key. A strong relationship between the public and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) relies upon the MPD being transparent and accountable. I continue to support civilian oversight of the police. Additionally, record sealing helps protect vulnerable communities because there are discriminatory algorithms in DC being used right now that affect people’s ability to rent, purchase fair insurance, and receive the appropriate levels of healthcare owed to people who qualify for programs based on medical and income needs.

9. Socialize Our Housing. Do you support the D.C. Green New Deal for Housing that proposes to take a social housing approach to disrupt the failed system of the market-focused one?

Yes – I support social housing because I recognize that housing is a human right. I believe that policymakers in DC should be laser-focused on making life better for those who live here now, not importing more and wealthier people as original residents are driven out.

Please return your questionnaire responses in PDF format by 11:59pm ET on Friday, April 19 on GLAA’s homepage. If you have trouble submitting your response through the page, you can email it to equal@glaa.org.

Thank you so much for providing us an opportunity to submit our positions on the questions you posed.

Kind Regards,

The Rodney Red Grant Campaign for DC City Council At-Large