

We appreciate your invitation, and we will begin by answering the following questions in the order you requested.

1. Fight for Home Rule. To protect DC's LGBTQ+ communities, will you oppose every single effort to infringe on DC's autonomy?

Yes. As a third-generation Washingtonian, I believe in the premise that this city deserves self-governance and should work for D.C. residents—not external influences, not Congress, nor any federal interference. This unprecedented time has led to a dangerous outcome and message for our D.C. residents, our Democracy, and our local communities, including the stripping of over \$1 billion from D.C.'s own budget and the reversal of laws passed by the D.C. Council. These measures, introduced by outside entities, plan to strip D.C.'s human rights, especially the right to protect LGBTQ+ residents. It is clear that D.C.'s Home Rule is not an abstract political debate, but a matter of public safety and dignity for real Washingtonians. As Mayor, I will use every tool and leverage available at my disposal to defend our Home Rule and protect the city from becoming a political ploy for power.

2. Stop Enabling Federal Overreach. To protect DC's LGBTQ+ communities, will you oppose every single effort to infringe on DC's autonomy?

Yes. As Mayor, I will refuse to support any authoritarian deployment of federal forces or unlawful collaboration between D.C. law enforcement and federal officials. I will not tolerate any federal task force participation that uses the National Guard troops or DHS officials as tools to suppress against our homes, residents, and communities. With the record 17% spike in police misconduct complaints and expanded MPD-federal collaboration, it is unacceptable, and I will direct D.C. agencies to cease sharing data with ICE, including to support passage of the Safe Community Places and Policing Amendment Act. D.C. must become a sanctuary for all of its Washingtonians in all communities, including LGBTQ+ and immigrants.

3. Question 3: Invest in a Just Legal System Do you support limiting pre-trial detention to evidence-based laws in place before 2023 and investing more resources into civil legal help?

Yes, within a certain context. This is what has been happening: pretrial detention for non-violent offenses causes more harm and implications than it prevents hate and violent crime around the city, leading people to lose jobs, housing, families, and stability before ever being convicted of anything. What has worked in the past is the pre-2023 standard, which releases 92% of individuals without rearrest and reduces recidivism. While I do support returning to an evidence-based framework for non-violent offenders and the use of alternative approaches to the treatment and sentencing of offenders, there should still be an enhancement of prosecution and accountability for certain criminal offenses, but that is fully consistent with reserving pretrial detention only for cases where it is warranted with due process. I also strongly support expanding civil legal aid resources and opportunities, for lack of legal representation has become an equity issue that disproportionately impacts children, seniors, immigrants, black and brown, LGBTQ+, and other communities who cannot afford attorneys in civil matters.

Question 4: Safe and Warm Homes Do you support strengthening and enforcing existing laws and investing DC's resources to end homelessness?

Yes. We are facing a severe housing crisis in the streets of Washington, D.C., and this issue did not happen overnight. For too long, lobbyists and developers have had outsized influence over this city's housing development — prioritizing profit margins over our residents, large luxury condos over affordable and middle housing units, and outside investment over longtime residents. This resulted in a 39% increase in homelessness between 2023 and 2025, displacing the longtime residents who built this city. When I am mayor, I will enforce the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act, giving residents the first opportunity to preserve their own homes. I will manage the Housing Production Trust Fund to develop permanent affordable units rather than subsidize developments that price out the residents we protect and serve in this community. I will strengthen tenant rights and close loopholes that developers and lobbyists have exploited for years. This crisis falls hardest on DC's most vulnerable residents — LGBTQ+ youth, transgender individuals, seniors, and immigrant families are disproportionately represented among our unhoused population. A government that works for DC residents, not special interests, must offer housing at an affordable price — not a commodity for outside investors to profit from. My administration will measure success not by how many luxury developments break ground, but by how many DC families have a safe and stable place to call home.

Question 5: Abundant and Nutritious Food Do you support increasing nutrition assistance benefits to fill the gap created by federal cuts?

Yes. The federal government's cuts to nutrition assistance programs are an attack on DC's most vulnerable residents, reducing access to healthy, affordable food in communities. In Ward 7 and 8, thousands of residents face food deserts and must overcome obstacles to access groceries and other essentials. In schools, students still cannot have access to free school lunches that meet their nutritional needs. DC must step up where the federal

government has failed. I support increasing local nutrition assistance benefits to fill this gap, consistent with my broader commitment to keeping DC dollars working for DC residents — especially our LGBTQ+ community, families, youth, and seniors. Food security is foundational — you cannot learn, work, or thrive without adequate nutrition.

Question 6: Power to the People Do you commit to prioritizing energy and water infrastructure for people over corporate profits?

Yes. For far too long, corporate interests, corrupt politicians, and lobbyists have driven up energy and water utility costs for DC residents. At the same time, the city's infrastructure continues to fail and deteriorate. The current utility commission structure has failed Washingtonians — allowing bills to skyrocket while everyday residents bear the burden of repairs they did not cause and should not pay for. This issue must end now.

As Mayor, I will hold utility commissioners accountable and push for structural reforms that prioritize affordability and reliability over corporate profit. The catastrophic sewage leak that poured hundreds of millions of gallons into the Potomac River this January is a direct consequence of neglected infrastructure and misplaced priorities. I will invest in replacing aging energy and water infrastructure without disrupting services or passing repair costs onto residents. I will prioritize lead pipe removal throughout the District — a public health crisis disproportionately impacting children, seniors, and our LGBTQ+ and immigrant communities in DC's most underserved neighborhoods. DC's energy and water systems are public goods intended to serve people, not to generate corporate profits.

Question 7: Healthcare is a Human Right Will you use every tool within your power to ensure transgender youth and adults have access to healthcare in DC?

Yes. As Mayor, I will use every tool available to ensure that no DC resident — regardless of age, identity, religion, race, or background — faces barriers or discrimination in accessing healthcare across the city. DC must be free from the healthcare deserts that leave too many in our community without care, and from federal and national attacks that target residents who depend on our healthcare system. That protection extends equally to transgender youth and adults, seniors, immigrants, and every Washingtonian who depends on our healthcare system. I will defend and expand DC's human rights protections to ensure healthcare is covered, affordable, and accessible to all families and communities, and push back against any federal effort to eliminate healthcare from any resident in our city. This issue is not a partisan issue — it is a matter of basic human dignity for every Washingtonian.

Question 8: Healthcare is a Smart Investment Do you commit to opposing cuts to Health Care Alliance and Medicaid to balance DC's budget?

Yes. Balancing the budget on the backs of our residents who depend on Medicaid and Healthcare Alliance is not a solution — it is a moral failure and a downfall for D.C. taxpayers. The cuts to the Health Care Alliance that stripped coverage from an estimated 10,000 people — many of them LGBTQ+ residents, immigrants, and returning citizens who have nowhere else to turn — were shortsighted fiscally as well as unjust. Preventive care is cheaper than emergency care. My administration will grow D.C.'s revenue through property tax reform on high-value exempt properties, commuter tolls, and economic development to alleviate high-burdened costs — not by cutting healthcare for people who have nowhere else to turn. I will oppose cuts to the D.C. Health Care Alliance and Medicaid, and will seek to restore and expand coverage.

Question 9: Access to Public Benefits Do you commit to creating the most accessible system for program beneficiaries, minimizing bureaucratic barriers for LGBTQ+ residents?

Yes. Lobbyists and special-interest developers have heavily influenced not just how we shape our city, but also the design of public benefits to be unnecessarily complicated, bureaucratic, and inaccessible — serving special interests, not the people those programs were built to protect.

My community work through Friends of the Frank Reeves Center taught me that the best programs mean nothing if residents cannot access them. Bureaucratic barriers fall hardest on many residents, seniors, immigrants, returning citizens, youth, and low-income families who need these programs the most, including those in the LGBTQ+ community.

As Mayor, I will audit every public benefit system to eliminate unnecessary barriers and simplify access. I will ensure identification documents are accessible to all residents, including transgender individuals whose gender identity differs from their original documents and those without permanent addresses. I will invest in constituent services as a frontline equity tool, fully fund public transportation as a public good, and ensure every resident has a welcoming place to seek guidance on public benefits.

A government that works for DC residents — not special interests — designs systems that are simple, dignified, and accessible to every Washingtonian regardless of who they are or where they come from.

Question 10:

Yes. Safety for every resident's well-being and health is one of my top priorities as Mayor. My administration will invest in violence prevention measures focused on community-based intervention, reformed law enforcement training, youth programs, and addressing the root causes of harm in our communities.

We must not allow law enforcement resources to be consumed by criminalizing sex work offenses when there are far more pressing public safety priorities. The current criminalization framework has caused serious harm to DC's most vulnerable residents, particularly within the LGBTQ+ community, transgender individuals, and immigrants. I am committed to listening to the communities most affected and ensuring that no discrimination or harassment goes unaddressed in this city.

As Mayor, I will prioritize resource centers, community-based alternatives to enforcement, and evidence-based approaches that protect every Washingtonian's safety and dignity.

Thank you, GLAA, for the opportunity to share my thoughts and concerns about Washington, D.C. We really appreciate your hard work and dedication.

Best,

The Campaign of Ernest Johnson