

Back to Basics

2026 GLAA Questionnaire

The following questions are based on [Back to Basics: GLAA Policy Brief 2026](#). 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.

See my people-first platform for more information <https://janeesefordc.com/people-first-platform/>

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

Yes.

In DC, because we lack statehood, the federal government has unique power to interfere in our local democracy. That is a threat to everyone in DC, but it disproportionately harms LGBTQ+ residents, especially trans residents. For example, legislation has been introduced in Congress to overturn our local gender identity and expression non-discrimination laws, something the federal government can do to no other jurisdiction in the country.

I will oppose every effort to infringe on DC's autonomy because Home Rule is one of the most important tools we have to protect LGBTQ+ residents. Federal attacks on DC can be used to

weaken our non-discrimination laws, restrict gender-affirming care, undermine sanctuary protections, interfere with public health programs, and block local safety policies that LGBTQ+ residents rely on.

Throughout my time in public service, I have fought for LGBTQ+ rights, Home Rule, and statehood. On the Council, I have supported protections for gender-affirming care, LGBTQ relationships, and HIV/AIDS-related healthcare access. As mayor, I will be a staunch defender of LGBTQ+ residents and DC autonomy. I will work closely with the Attorney General to defend DC laws that protect LGBTQ+ residents, including our protections for gender identity and expression, access to healthcare, housing, employment, public accommodations, and local self-government.

When I went to speak with members of Congress, they often said it was the first time they'd ever met a DC elected official. As mayor, I will continue to walk the halls of Congress. I will build a congressional coalition to defend DC's rights and values, and I will make clear that attacks on Home Rule are attacks on the residents our laws are designed to protect.

My record shows that I do not wait until a crisis becomes convenient to act. I have stood up against Trump's occupation of our city, defended DC's sanctuary values, and introduced legislation to end local police cooperation with ICE. In my 2024 re-election campaign, GLAA gave me a +9.5 rating, the highest rating among councilmembers.

As mayor, I will ensure the Office of Federal Affairs has the leadership, capacity, and direction needed to interface directly with Congress and the White House. I will partner with local grassroots organizations like Free DC, the DC Statehood Coalition, LGBTQ+ advocates, and civil rights organizations to educate and activate DC residents.

I will also build stronger relationships with the Democratic Governors Association, the Democratic Mayors Association, and state and city leaders across the country to elevate DC's needs as a national priority. DC will not be left to fight these attacks alone.

I will align our federal advocacy, legal strategy, legislative strategy, and national and grassroots organizing so DC is prepared to defend LGBTQ+ residents and protect our autonomy from federal attacks.

<https://www.washingtonblade.com/2024/10/15/glaa-releases-ratings-dc-council-candidates/>

2. Stop Enabling Federal Overreach. Will you refuse to cooperate with the Federal Government in its undemocratic use of power, including the authoritarian deployment of National Guard troops?

Yes.

I will refuse to cooperate with undemocratic federal overreach, including the misuse of federal law enforcement or National Guard deployments that undermine the safety, rights, and autonomy of DC residents.

Over the past year, I have demanded greater transparency about collaboration between the DC government and federal law enforcement and called for an end to MPD cooperation with ICE. When residents were being targeted at schools and other sensitive places, I introduced the Safe Community Places and Policing Amendment Act to strengthen our local protections. That legislation would limit MPD cooperation with ICE, prevent MPD from transporting ICE agents, and protect schools, hospitals, and other essential places from immigration enforcement activity.

As Mayor, I will continue that approach. I will not allow District resources to be used to undermine public trust or help federal actions that harm our residents. I will work with the Attorney General, use public advocacy and coalition-building, and defend Home Rule against federal interference. DC residents deserve safety rooted in prevention, intervention, enforcement, and community trust, not political occupation or manufactured federal crackdowns.

3. Invest In a Just Legal System. To support LGBTQ+ people involved in the legal system, do you support limiting pre-trial detention at a minimum to the evidence-based laws in place before 2023 and investing more resources into civil legal help?

Yes.

I support limiting unnecessary pretrial detention and returning to evidence-based pretrial policies. I opposed expanding pretrial detention in 2023 and 2024 because we should not broaden the use of detention for people who are presumed innocent. Although my position did not carry the day, I supported guardrails on those changes, including making them temporary and requiring the District to track outcomes.

I also support investing more resources into civil legal help for LGBTQ+ residents. A just legal system should reduce unnecessary incarceration, protect people's rights, and support stability for residents who are disproportionately impacted by the criminal legal system.

4. Safe and Warm Homes. In light of disproportionate representation of LGBTQ+ among people without stable housing, do you support strengthening and enforcing the existing laws and investing the District's resources to end homelessness in DC?

Yes.

LGBTQ+ residents, especially youth, are disproportionately impacted by housing instability and homelessness in DC. I support strengthening enforcement of existing housing protections, expanding deeply affordable housing, and investing District resources to end homelessness.

During my time on the Council, I worked to prevent displacement and keep residents housed. I supported efforts to extend the eviction moratorium during COVID until rental assistance was available. I introduced the Green New Deal for Housing to expand publicly owned, deeply affordable housing. I also fought to protect tenants' rights through amendments to major housing legislation and secured funding for additional housing inspectors to hold landlords accountable

for unsafe conditions. I have supported investments in emergency rental assistance and the Housing Production Trust Fund to help residents stay housed.

To address the scale of the crisis, I have committed in my housing plan to building 72,000 new homes over five years. Increasing housing supply, alongside deeply affordable housing and tenant protections, is critical to reducing homelessness and ensuring LGBTQ+ residents can remain in DC.

We must also ensure that shelters and housing programs are safe and affirming for LGBTQ+ residents, including transgender residents, while addressing the root causes of housing instability. That includes ensuring LGBTQ+ seniors have access to stable, affordable housing so they can age with dignity and remain in their communities.

<https://janeeseward4.com/introducing-green-new-deal-legislation-to-create-social-housing-and-re-move-lead-pipes-in-dc>

5. Abundant and Nutritious Food. Do you support increasing the nutrition assistance program benefits to fill the gap created by the federal government?

Yes.

I support increasing nutrition assistance benefits to fill the gap created by federal cuts and rising food costs. DC residents should not go hungry because the federal government retreats from its responsibility to families, seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income residents.

I have supported expansion of nutrition assistance, including securing funding for the Give SNAP a Raise effort and my work to increase SNAP food assistance for families and seniors. I also co-introduced legislation creating a Senior Food Security Taskforce, because ending hunger requires both direct benefits and a coordinated strategy to reach residents who are too often left behind.

As Mayor, I will build on that work by increasing SNAP participation among eligible residents, expanding multilingual outreach, reducing administrative barriers, and working alongside advocates and people with lived experience of food insecurity to strengthen these programs. I will also treat food access as a citywide equity issue, including the need for more grocery stores east of the river and stronger standards for healthy, sustainable food in District facilities.

<https://janeeseward4.com/funding-secured-to-expand-snap-food-assistance-for-dc-residents-and-support-excluded-workers/>

6. Power to the People. Do you commit to providing economic relief to DC's LGBTQ+ residents and businesses by investing in energy and water infrastructure that prioritizes the people of DC over corporate profits?

Yes.

I am committed to providing economic relief to DC residents and small businesses by investing in energy and water infrastructure that puts people before corporate profits. Utilities are basic needs, and residents should not be forced to pay inflated bills because of weak oversight, corporate rate hikes, or infrastructure decisions that benefit shareholders more than the public.

In response to the Pepco rate hike crisis and the court decision vacating and remanding the Public Service Commission's approval of Pepco's multi-year rate plan, I introduced emergency legislation to protect customers from electricity shutoffs while the rate case was being addressed. That legislation temporarily prevented Pepco from disconnecting residents and businesses with balances of \$1,000 or less.

As Mayor, I will protect Washingtonians from Pepco and Washington Gas rate hikes, appoint Public Service Commissioners who center community impact, and use legal and regional strategies to hold AI data centers accountable for driving up energy costs. I will also expand community solar, government solar, and balcony solar to reduce electric bills, provide utility credits for low- and middle-income households, increase access to energy assistance, and help small businesses access lower-cost power.

I also believe water shutoffs create serious public health and economic harms. People need water to cook, bathe, do laundry, maintain employment, and stay healthy. I do not believe inability to pay should be a reason to deny a household access to water.

This is especially important for LGBTQ+ residents and businesses who are already navigating high costs, discrimination, housing instability, and uneven access to economic opportunity. My administration will treat utility affordability as part of a broader affordability agenda, not as another way for corporations to extract from working people.

<https://www.washingtoninformer.com/dc-council-federal-officer-transparency-2/>

7. Health Care is Human Right. Will you use every tool within your power to ensure transgender youth and adults have access to healthcare in DC?

Yes.

I will use every tool available to ensure transgender youth and adults have access to healthcare in DC. At a time when gender-affirming care is under attack across the country, DC must remain a place where residents, providers, and families are protected.

As a Councilmember, I supported and co-sponsored legislation protecting DC providers of reproductive and gender-affirming care, including those serving patients from states where that care is restricted. I have also supported strengthening non-discrimination protections in health care. As Mayor, I will work closely with the Attorney General to defend and enforce these laws.

I will also use the District's policy and budget tools to sustain LGBTQ+-friendly health centers so they can continue providing the full range of LGBTQ+ health and gender-affirming care to DC

residents. Health care is a human right, and that means guaranteeing real access to gender-affirming care and the full range of services transgender residents need to live healthy lives.

<https://www.billtrack50.com/billdetail/1707144>

8. Health Care is a Smart Investment. Do you commit to opposing cuts to the Health Care Alliance and Medicaid health insurance programs to balance DC's budget?

Yes.

I opposed cuts to the Health Care Alliance and broader health coverage. As a Council Member, I voted against the final FY26 budget support legislation because it reduced health coverage and weakened the safety net for low-income residents. I also pushed to restore Health Care Alliance funding when additional revenue became available.

These cuts are not only harmful, they are economically short-sighted. When people lose coverage, hospitals and clinics are forced to absorb the cost of uncompensated care, which drives up costs across the system and weakens critical community institutions.

As Mayor, I will oppose cuts to the Health Care Alliance and Medicaid and focus on reducing underlying healthcare costs so we can maintain and expand coverage. That includes taking on high drug prices, reducing administrative barriers that push people off insurance, and pursuing reforms that improve care while lowering costs.

<https://www.washingtoninformer.com/in-second-budget-vote-a-lot-of-disappointment/>

9. Access to Public Benefits. Do you commit to creating the most accessible system for program beneficiaries possible to minimize LGBTQ+ people not being able to access benefits due to bureaucracy?

Yes.

I commit to creating the most accessible benefits system possible so LGBTQ+ residents are not denied food, healthcare, housing, disability supports, or economic security because of bureaucracy.

As Mayor, I will make government easier to navigate by improving interagency coordination, assigning clear responsibility to agencies, strengthening public accountability, and taking a hands-on approach to oversight. My administration will focus on making government accessible, trusted, and effective at improving people's lives.

That means reducing red tape in public benefits, simplifying applications and recertification wherever legally possible, expanding language and disability access, and ensuring residents can get help by phone, online, and in person. I will remove barriers that prevent residents from accessing benefits in the first place, including helping unhoused residents obtain the identification needed to enroll, reducing paperwork and recertification churn, and opposing punitive eligibility restrictions that push people off public benefits.

I will also strengthen oversight of our healthcare system, including establishing a healthcare finance oversight function to ensure agencies, insurers, and providers are accountable, and costs are controlled.

This is especially important for LGBTQ+ residents who may already face discrimination, housing instability, disability, or barriers to affirming care. A benefits system should help residents get stable, not punish them for trying to access support.

10. Fight Crime At The Source. Do you support decriminalizing sex work and making better investments in violence prevention activities?

No, not yet on sex work decriminalization. Yes, on making better investments in violence prevention. I am interested in learning more about alternatives that reduce criminalization and prioritize safety, health, and economic stability over punishment. I am also clear that criminalization has had a disproportionate and harmful impact on Black women, especially Black trans women.

My approach to public safety is prevention, intervention, enforcement, and trust. As Mayor, I will invest in strategies that prevent harm before it happens and ensure residents get the right response from the right system.

That means creating Community Hubs in every ward where young people and families can access programs, services, city resources, and behavioral health supports, and expanding after-school, before-school, and evening programming, including sports, recreation, and career development opportunities.

It means fully funding ONSE, expanding and standardizing violence prevention and intervention programs in communities most affected by gun violence, and ensuring that trained mental health professionals can respond to behavioral health emergencies when appropriate. For too long, the District has not consistently funded or effectively implemented prevention and intervention at the scale our city needs, and we are not getting the outcomes residents deserve from the resources we are already investing in crisis response.

Other jurisdictions are achieving better results at lower cost with targeted response models that connect people to care, and DC should be doing the same.

As Mayor, I will build a system where every agency is focused on the work it is best equipped to do so that our public safety is actually effective and accountable.

See my people-first platform for more information <https://janeesefordc.com/people-first-platform/>

Please return your questionnaire responses in PDF format by 11:59pm ET on Friday, April 24 to equal@glaa.org.