

## 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.

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

First, let me say that it is an honor to respond to GLAA's questionnaire. I pay tribute to GLAA's long and important history in DC, and its roots in Frank Kameny's quest for representation as a gay man and for justice as a federal employee. At a time when federal workers have been mistreated and (deliberately, knowingly) traumatized — including my own partner, Luis, who worked at USAID — many DC residents can relate anew to Frank's fight for dignity in the face of an unfeeling bureaucracy. I also pay tribute to Paul Kuntzler's role in founding this organization; I have had the privilege of meeting Paul on a few occasions, and was recently proud to honor his life of service at the Capital Stonewall Democrats' 50th anniversary reception, which Paul attended.

Events since August have proven to Washingtonians once again the urgency of our demand for greater autonomy and full representation. We are not safe unless all of us are safe. DC statehood is a civil rights issue, as Congress could at any minute roll back local laws that enshrine our rights — including our foundational Human Rights Act of 1977, as well as the apparatus that monitors and enforces it. This issue is, of course, a structural one that renders many communities vulnerable, not only the LGBTQ+ community. As a current LGBTQ elected

leader, and as a Latino American, I am viscerally aware of the dynamics at play here, as well as their intersectionality.

Through my work with Free DC and the Home Rule Caucus, I've learned important lessons about Congress and how they think about us. One of the most salient is that Members of Congress who aren't firmly on our side tend to see legislative attacks on the District in isolation rather than as part of a coordinated, anti-democratic effort to bring the capital to heel. They also tend to see Councilmembers' unannounced drop-ins on the Hill as stunts rather than sincere lobbying efforts. Lastly, Members of Congress often feel that they can barrel over our shadow delegation, which can't keep up due to a lack of resources.

My first approach will be to establish long-term relationships with our Hill counterparts so that our lobbying efforts are viewed with more sincerity. This will also include connecting the dots for Members of Congress and staff about the threats to DC and their wider implications for American democracy. We Councilmembers must iterate a clear, simple message to Congressional offices who may not fully appreciate the stakes.

Secondly, I will work closely with the Delegate's office and the shadow delegation, which should be more proactive in managing relationships around the Hill and leaning into local social networks to advance DC's case. As a Commissioner, I recognize the difficult position of the all-volunteer shadow delegation, and as a Councilmember, I will work to bolster their resources so they have more tools to lobby Hill colleagues and block harmful legislation from passing.

I have worked to expand ANCs' collective capacity to advocate upward by founding and leading the ANC Home Rule Caucus, comprising around 75 commissioners across the District, which has coordinated a range of initiatives in response to federal overreach, including but not limited to Congress's theft of District funds, immigration-enforcement operations, and the National Guard deployment. We partnered with Free DC to deliver advocacy letters and resolutions directly to key offices on the Hill. The Caucus also lobbied the DC Council to hold an oversight hearing regarding MPD's relationship with federal agencies since the August 11 federalization. Additionally, I am proud to be a member of Senator Jain's Statehood Advisory Council, another forum for coordinating federal-facing advocacy.

As a Councilmember, I will scale up these efforts, with a few priorities in my approach:

- Being present on the ground, especially in times of crisis. Some Councilmembers have been intentional about showing up on the scene of federal overreach, to bear witness and to amplify the testimony of others. This is a crucial role for elected officials to perform, though many choose not to.
- Holding Council hearings to offer transparency into how the District government is interacting with the federal government. Aside from offering District residents (who are already underrepresented) perhaps their only forum to be heard, hearings serve to maintain public confidence in the District government's capacity and thereby demonstrate the value of Home Rule and the necessity of defending it.
- Striving to have the District government speak with one voice to the federal government, lest any internal division be exploited by the District's opponents.
- Assessing whether our current federal-affairs apparatus (OFRA in the Executive, plus one federal-affairs liaison position in the Council Chairman's office) is sufficient to advocate for the District's priorities across the federal executive and legislative branches.

At the Council, I will vote for legislation that would benefit the District, even if we expect that Congress may overturn it. This includes bills that protect and advance civil rights. Some Councilmembers are wary of passing laws that might attract Congressional disapproval; however, this posture ultimately paralyzes our Council and amounts to obedience in advance.

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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'm proud to have the strongest record of anyone in this race in terms of opposing this federal takeover. I do not support MPD cooperation with ICE. While I recognize the inherent imbalance of power between the District and the federal government, I will navigate that imbalance creatively with the power we do have to advance the best interests of DC residents. That's what I've done as a Commissioner, and it's what I'll do as a Councilmember through a combination of oversight and advocacy.

The behavior of ICE and other federal agencies on the streets of Washington has been reckless and lawless. It has been offensive to me personally, as an American raised by Latino immigrants — my mother and grandparents, who immigrated from Brazil and raised me together in a multigenerational household. The behavior of federal agents has also been offensive to me professionally as I worked for many years in the immigration and national security system. My first federal job was in the Foreign Service, at the Department of State, where I served as a consular officer overseas, conducting visa interviews, beginning in 2012. When I returned to DC permanently in 2016, I worked at the Department of Homeland Security, where a major part of my job was to teach immigration law to new hires and to ensure conformity across different agencies' interpretations of immigration law. As a former consular officer, I identified major gaps in training on immigration law, and felt it was my duty to address those gaps, especially under the first Trump Administration, in an effort to uphold the rule of law and my oath to the Constitution. What we have seen in DC and other American cities flies in the face of our immigration law (broken though it be) and undermines the missions of national security and public safety that the Trump Administration claims to champion. It must end.

To see how I will use my authority as a Councilmember to ensure that our local agencies are not cooperating with federal officers outside of processes that have clear legal authority and rigorous oversight, just look at my record.

Early in the federal takeover of the city, details about the collaboration between MPD and ICE were sparse. I was especially disheartened to see the DC Council not moving quickly to demand transparency and accountability from the outset. Ward 1 was facing the brunt of this chaos and, amid this information vacuum, I decided to act the only way I could: by using my authority as chairman of ANC 1B to conduct our own oversight so we could get answers immediately. I brought the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice before our Commission to answer detailed questions about cooperation between District agencies, including MPD, and the federal government. Was there an MOU or cooperative agreement between MPD and federal immigration agencies? Were they sharing radio frequencies? What were District officials doing to end the practice of ICE agents wearing gear misleadingly labeled "police"? While we didn't get all the information we wanted, this episode did allow us to go back to our constituents and report what we'd learned. The Council can and must exert this same autonomy. I have been heartened by past examples of this, such as Councilmember Nadeau's hearing on human-rights violations, at which I testified.

That was a creative use of the authority of the Committee on Public Works and Operations when other committees of jurisdiction were unwilling or unable to act.

I did all of this not only because we needed answers in the short term, but also because I know that, in the long run, cooperation between MPD and ICE erodes trust in our public safety officers. It makes people afraid to call the police when they see actual crime occurring or experience it themselves, and it makes the MPD's statutory mission of community policing extremely difficult to uphold by forcing immigrant victims and witnesses back into the shadows. Ultimately, it erodes safety for all of us.

With specific reference to our immigrant neighbors — not the only residents at risk of violations of constitutional or civil rights, but certainly top of mind right now — I will advocate for the Council to use its legislative authority to enable and fund a robust representation program for DC residents in detention and/or immigration court. People should not be deprived of due process simply because they cannot afford or find legal representation to navigate our complex immigration system. I will introduce legislation to amend the Sanctuary Values Amendment Act to (a) prohibit information-sharing with respect to detained persons, such as in traffic stops, to ensure that routine interactions with MPD do not create a pretext for federal involvement, including by ICE and CBP; (b) expand and increase the frequency of reporting requirements for MPD; (c) create protections against warrantless civil immigration enforcement at sensitive locations; and (d) prohibit the use of face coverings and indistinct uniforms by immigration officers. I will also advocate for legislation to establish an Office of Immigrant Affairs or Office of New Americans, like many other major cities have, to better coordinate services and advocacy.

The moment that the federal takeover began on August 11, I sprang into action to mobilize resistance:

- As a commissioner, my immediate reaction to the emergency declaration was to convene a meeting of the **ANC Home Rule Caucus**, which I chair ([Aug. 12](#)). Early in 2025 I had founded the Home Rule Caucus, a group of 75+ ANC commissioners from across the District, to coordinate on DC autonomy issues. Our meeting on the night of August 12 focused on planning concurrent resolutions across ANCs to condemn the federal takeover; pressuring Congress to end the Section 740 state of emergency after the statutory 30-day period; and documenting federal overreach in our neighborhoods.

- I participated in a briefing with Mayor Bowser and published on social media the three principles that her team laid out for federal operations in the District, including that federal personnel would wear agency-identifying insignia ([Aug. 13](#)). I monitored fast-moving events on the ground for compliance with those principles ([Aug. 13](#)). I wrote to other elected officials to seek clarifications ([Aug. 14](#)) and shared the responses I received ([Aug. 14](#)). I flagged, for the Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's attention, videos showing operations in DC that appeared to violate the principles ([Aug. 15](#), [Aug. 17](#)) and would go on to discuss these incidents directly with the Deputy Mayor.
  - As it became clear these principles were not being respected, I drafted and introduced a resolution in my ANC calling on District officials to pressure federal counterparts to develop guidelines on masking and identifiability ([Sep. 4](#)). It was crucial to me that ICE and other federal agents stop concealing their identities and wearing deceptive uniforms that said "POLICE." ICE agents are not our police. These are darkly authoritarian practices that instill fear and complicate legal accountability for the families of detained people. My resolution also called on the DC Attorney General to publicize information about federal agents' obligations with respect to identification/badging and about channels for reporting violations. The resolution further applauded the VISIBLE Act being considered in the U.S. Senate and called on the DC Council to enact similar legislation. My commission passed the resolution unanimously on September 4 ([read here](#)). I worked through my networks to lobby other commissions to do the same; at least a dozen other ANCs around the District did so ([see list here](#), also [Sep. 29](#)). I took copies of the passed resolutions to Capitol Hill in partnership with Free DC's Congress Working Group, and personally delivered them to key Senate offices ([Sep. 8](#)).
  - At the same meeting, I introduced and my ANC passed a **concurrent resolution** that, among other things, supported legal challenges by the DC Attorney General and civil-society organizations that "contest[ed] that the statutory emergency threshold under Section 740" — the basis for the president's emergency declaration — "[had] been lawfully met" ([read here](#)). I also undertook a citywide lobbying effort to activate other ANCs around this resolution. It is very difficult to coordinate among the 46 commissions around the District; they have varying levels of interest and capacity, and at this time, many commissions were on

summer break. I am extremely proud that my hands-on coordination effort, involving phone calls and emails to dozens and dozens of commissioners, bore fruit: around 36 commissions ended up debating this resolution and nearly all of them passed it (e.g.: [GW Hatchet](#); see a mostly complete tracker [here](#)). Fourteen commissions called special sessions (i.e., meetings outside their regular schedule) just to consider the resolution, in response to my lobbying efforts. This campaign showed the potential of ANCs across the District to act in concert; indeed, one of my explicit goals was to build muscle memory for ANCs to collaborate, especially on foundational issues of home rule and self-determination.

- I posted a video I took of an excessive federal law-enforcement operation to apprehend a single woman experiencing homelessness in Ward 1 ([Sep. 2](#)). This incident illustrated how the federal surge/“emergency” fell harshly on other vulnerable groups along with immigrants.
- I compared the federal government’s actions in DC to those we had seen earlier in the summer in Los Angeles and raised Fourth Amendment concerns ([Aug. 14](#)). I celebrated Attorney General Schwalb’s strong opinion in opposition to the so-called emergency police commissioner ([Aug. 15](#)).
- I worked with commissioner colleagues through the Home Rule Caucus to prepare and publish an op-ed (principal authors Commissioners Footer, Sherman, and Allison) which pointed out that “public safety is not improved when trained local police are replaced with military personnel” and that we were at risk of “undoing a decade of progress in community policing.” I am a signatory to the piece, which ran in The 51st ([Aug. 29](#)). I tweeted commentary on it ([Sep. 3](#)).
  - I amplified the joint message, making a similar argument, that DC religious leaders including the Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde had issued on effective policing and true public safety ([Aug. 14](#)).
  - I spoke to the media about the economic impacts of the National Guard deployment ([Aug. 21](#)).
- I was very proud to participate in the “We Are All DC” march and rally sponsored by Free DC ([Sep. 6](#)) as well as the “No Kings” rally ([Oct. 19](#)). I also took extra pride in joining Fiesta DC this year as an act of defiance and solidarity ([Sep. 28](#)).
- I raised further legal concerns about apprehensions of Latino residents in DC based on racial profiling, including that of José Escobar Molina, which appeared to fly in the face of Justice Kavanaugh’s assurances in *Noem v. Vasquez Perdomo* ([Sep. 26](#)).

- I applauded Councilmember Nadeau’s convening of a human-rights hearing in the Council and called on the Council’s Committee on Public Safety to follow suit by conducting MPD oversight ([Oct. 23](#)). I participated in the human-rights hearing, at which I asked the Council: “what is the value of the Human Rights Act or the Sanctuary Values Act if they are not enforced?” (quoted in [The 51st](#), on [NBC4](#), on [Bluesky](#), and in [Washington Socialist](#); testimony available [here](#)).
- I worked closely with Commissioner Garrett to draft a letter from commissioners calling on Councilmember Pinto to hold an MPD oversight hearing ([Oct. 23](#); the letter was issued on [Oct. 27](#) and can be found [here](#)). Among other things, we asked the Council to investigate which directives governed MPD’s engagement with federal immigration enforcement agencies; what interpretive guidance or training MPD personnel had received regarding their interactions with federal agencies; and what mechanisms are in place for residents, schools, or other local leaders to report incidents of potential misconduct.
- I expressed frustration that community members were not receiving responses to their letters to the Mayor seeking information on MPD’s rules of engagement vis-à-vis federal operations ([Oct. 29](#)).

I also undertook other efforts at that time:

- Since August 12 (the day after the emergency declaration), I have conducted regular **know-your-rights outreach in both English and Spanish** to vulnerable populations in my ANC district. Eventually, I partnered with Free DC’s Ward 1 team to routinize this outreach: we created a group of neighbors who now rotate KYR shifts every week and can cover when I’m away or unavailable. I am very grateful for the cooperation of Free DC and for my neighbors’ generosity with their time, without which this would not be possible!
  - I attended a convening of municipal officials and activists from multiple cities in Chicago on October 30, at the height of ICE and CBP operations there, to share experiences/best practices, engage in scenario planning to strengthen our readiness to respond to various potential provocations by the federal government, and build relationships across jurisdictions to create a collaborative network of partners. (I participated in a second such convening in December, too.)
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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 am insistent upon research-driven approaches to public safety and criminal justice. I am aware that criminological research shows that pre-trial detention often does not lead to better public safety outcomes in the long term, as destabilizing employment, housing, and community relations for individuals in pre-detention can result in higher rates of recidivism. This challenge has especially significant implications for youth involved in the justice system and their future. The Council should explore evidence-based alternatives that better ensure court appearances without creating undue harm, such as the system used in New Jersey.

Additionally, expanding pre-trial detention contributes to DC's challenges related to overcrowding and the need for additional staff capacity and resources in holding facilities. This issue has an increased public cost, requiring additional resources to address the rising number of individuals held in DC-operated facilities. I also acknowledge the disparate racial impact of expanding pre-trial detention, due to DC's communities of color having a larger number of interactions with the justice system.

I support investing in ensuring access to legal aid for DC residents with low incomes. As a Councilmember, I will fight for sufficient funding for efficient legal aid programs. This includes providing stable and sufficient funding for the Access to Justice Initiative, which is DC's largest program that provides access to civil legal services for residents with low incomes. The program offers access to legal services related to vital issues, including family law, housing, consumer protection, and employment.

At the Council, I will also sponsor legislation to fund access to pro-bono or "low bono" legal representation for DC residents in detention and/or immigration court. People should not be barred from due process simply because they cannot afford or find legal representation to navigate our complex immigration system. There are excellent organizations that provide these much-needed services, but we need more resources to make those services more widely accessible to the community.

I also support the LGBTQ+ Budget Coalition priorities for boosting education and enforcement efforts for civil and LGBTQ+ protections in DC, including ensuring that the DC Office of Human Rights (OHR) is adequately staffed to investigate and document LGBTQ+ discrimination incidents, and increasing outreach to employers, housing providers, and healthcare workers to educate them on protections for DC's LGBTQ+ community.

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**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.**

We deserve to live in a DC where we can all afford to stay in our homes, feed our families, and be able to enjoy all that the city has to offer. Affordability is at the core of my vision for Ward 1.

DC's LGBTQ community is not a monolith. Members of our community who earn lower incomes, are people of color, and/or identify as trans or non-binary are more likely to face financial challenges and discrimination in housing. Therefore, my North Star is making the city work better for our most vulnerable neighbors.

In 2025, the share of unhoused Washingtonians who self-identify as LGBTQ+ was 37% among youth (18–24) and nearly 12% among adults. As a Councilmember, I will use my budgeting, legislative, and oversight authorities to advance affordable housing, including LGBTQ-affirming transitional and supportive housing, and to enforce fair housing protections, with a focus on ensuring that our queer youth and trans neighbors can access stable and affordable homes and LGBTQ seniors can be protected from displacement.

As a Councilmember, I will champion expanding resources for LGBTQ+ affirming transitional housing, with a focus on moving towards the non-congregate shelter model. This includes providing support to expand the capacity of housing programs for LGBTQ youth administered by the Wanda Alston Foundation and SMYAL.

I will also work on ensuring that the DC's Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF) program, alongside funding from the Department of Housing and Community Development and the DC Housing Finance Agency, supports LGBTQ+ affirming

housing. To increase the effectiveness of DC's HPTF, I support enacting the Housing Production Omnibus Act of 2026, legislation co-introduced by Councilmembers Brianne Nadeau and Robert White. The Housing Production Omnibus Act would reform the HPTF program by creating five separate accounts, each with a dedicated purpose: production (construction), preservation, property purchases through the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), subsidies for deeply affordable homes, and land acquisition by the District. This would enable the Council to resource and monitor each account and the respective housing goals it funds. Scaling the production of LGBTQ+ affirming affordable homes must be accompanied by a push for dedicating a set-aside for LGBTQ+ residents experiencing housing instability within DC's housing voucher program. Expanding rental assistance will enable more LGBTQ+ renters experiencing housing instability to access affordable housing.

However, I am also aware that we need to ensure effective operations of LGBTQ+ affirming housing supported by public investments, to avoid issues witnessed at Mary's House for Older Adults, including safety and management challenges.

I also support taking a more comprehensive look at how we invest in affordable housing production and preservation, and whether we can identify new funding streams to support affordability programs amid constrained budget seasons. As a Councilmember, I would support expanding DC's efforts to create publicly financed mixed-income housing (sometimes called social housing). This may include new housing that is partially financed by equity and debt financing by the DC Government, as well as housing acquired through the District Opportunity to Purchase Act (DOPA) — an underused tool in the District's housing toolbox.

Building new affordable housing without preserving affordability will lead to a net loss of affordable homes in DC. I will champion the strengthening of TOPA, a powerful tool that can prevent displacement and give residents a role in the future of their neighborhoods. A local TOPA success story was the (unanimous) vote of the residents at the former Faircliff Plaza East Apartments to assign their rights to a developer, which redeveloped the building into what is now the Faircliff, adding more than 50% more homes. Residents who wished to return to the new development were accommodated through construction and the great majority did end up relocating back to their original neighborhood.

As a Councilmember, I will work on reversing or mitigating some of the harmful changes to TOPA under the RENTAL Act. These negative changes include the

last-minute amendment exempting two- to four-unit properties from TOPA. These properties make up two-thirds of all multifamily rental properties in the District, and therefore the exemption denies thousands of renters the opportunity to take advantage of TOPA to potentially become homeowners by purchasing their units or ensuring that their properties continue to serve as unsubsidized affordable housing. While an exemption for new construction is reasonable to avoid unintended negative impacts on the supply of new homes, a 15-year window is too long. I would support reducing the exemption timeline.

When it comes to addressing LGBTQ housing issues, I fully support the DC LGBTQ+ Budget Coalition budget priorities (as stated in the Capital Stonewall Democrats Candidate Forum held on April 13):

- o \$1.1 million to expand the District’s LGBTQ+-specific transitional housing capacity for youth
- o \$500,000 for the Mayor’s Office of Community Affairs to administer at least 20 dedicated housing vouchers for at-risk LGBTQ+ residents, ensuring access to stable, affirming housing pathways
- o Increased funding for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) to ensure timely and sufficient rental assistance, with intentional outreach and access for LGBTQ+ residents who face disproportionate eviction risk.

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

The federal spending cut for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the newly imposed work requirements are expected to have a significant negative impact on food security in DC, especially for families with low incomes.

At the Council, I will explore raising new funds for DC’s Give SNAP a Raise Amendment Act, which increases SNAP benefits for DC residents by providing a locally funded supplement that is equal to 10% of a household's federal maximum SNAP benefits. This action will help fill in some of the gaps created by federal cuts to SNAP; however, more should be done. As a Councilmember, I will explore ways to increase support for local programs that help address food insecurity, including DC's Produce Plus program that provides eligible residents with financial assistance to purchase local produce at participating farmers markets and farm stands. Additionally, the Council needs to expand outreach

and administrative assistance to help DC families comply with and provide documentation for the newly imposed work requirements for SNAP.

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**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.**

The rates for electricity provided by Pepco have spiked in DC over the past couple of years. One of the key reasons is revisions to the way rate increases are calculated, which is now based on future projections rather than justifiable historic consumption and cost trends. At the Council, I will support the Utility Rates and Ratemaking Amendment Act, which would mandate that any Pepco rate hikes be proposed and justified by historic costs rather than forecasted budgets.

We should also invest in public clean energy projects. Such investments would enable the DC government to reduce costs by relying more on clean energy resources, especially community solar energy projects. As a Councilmember, I will support strengthening and stabilizing funding for programs that invest in clean energy. At the Council, I will support the Solar for All program, which invests in installing community solar systems on commercial or multifamily properties in DC. The program helps reduce utility bills for eligible DC residents.

I will also support the Sustainable Energy Trust Fund (SETF), which is funded by a surcharge on electric and natural gas ratepayers. SETF supports clean energy programs administered by the DC Department of Energy and Environment, including the Healthy Homes Act, which supports households with low and moderate incomes by covering the cost of electrification retrofits.

While the Council does not have direct control over Pepco, which is a private company, the Public Service Commission (PSC) approves rate hikes proposed by Pepco. As a Councilmember, I will use my oversight and confirmation authority to ensure that the PSC has the interest of DC residents as a top priority.

I also believe that we need more transparency from Pepco about the cost implications for data centers in the region serviced by the company, and whether the high levels of energy consumption by data centers result in higher costs that are then transferred to households.

At the Council, I will also support protecting the Anacostia River Cleanup Fund, which supports stormwater management and watershed protection. I will also push for protecting the Lead Poisoning Prevention Fund, which is essential for clean, lead-free water.

Finally, for cost-related challenges impacting both water and electricity billing, I support the Transparent Rates and Utility Expenses Amendment Act, which requires housing providers to be transparent about all applicable charges for a rental unit, including all utility costs, and how these utility costs are calculated and allocated to tenants.

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**7. Health Care 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.**

Access to affordable and reliable health care for LGBTQ+ residents is a top priority for me. I have personally spoken to medical practitioners and patients who are responding to, and planning around, the unpredictable effects of political uncertainty on their physiological and mental well-being. That is unacceptable. I have been advocating for restoring Alliance benefits, which are especially critical for LGBTQ+ residents in DC who do not qualify for Medicaid. The FY2026 budget cut for Alliance means that LGBTQ+ individuals with low incomes, immigrants, asylum seekers, and sex workers will face barriers to accessing necessary healthcare services, including dental and behavioral health services.

Additionally, the Trump Administration effectively gutted SAMHSA, which funded a large portion of DC grants that support substance abuse and mental health services. This means that the DC government must step up to find new ways to fund these essential services, especially for vulnerable LGBTQ residents. As a Councilmember, I will champion increasing financial support for Whitman-Walker Health, which is DC's primary LGBTQ+-focused Federally Qualified Health Center.

I will also champion fully funding and implementing the PrEP DC Act, which prohibits insurers from imposing restrictions, delays, or cost-sharing requirements for the coverage of HIV prevention medication or services. This local legislation protects access to PrEP in DC from any federal attacks that roll back access to HIV prevention. I will also use my oversight authority to ensure proper enforcement of the measure to avoid violations by insurers.

**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.**

Restoring Alliance is the right thing to do, and makes all of us safer. Forcing people off health insurance only increases their dependency on emergency rooms, which leads to poorer health outcomes (less preventive care, fewer routine checkups that can catch problems early, etc.) and costs the system more money. Programs like Alliance are Band-Aids on broken systems (healthcare, immigration) that require fixes at the national level, but in the absence of action from Congress to enact reforms, we in the District need to act responsibly to take care of our people and manage our local systems efficiently.

Aside from working to restore funding, I will be a leader on the Council in protecting our federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), which provide accessible and culturally competent care in our neighborhoods — such as Whitman-Walker Health here in Ward 1. Our FQHCs are under increased pressure due to reductions in federal and local support, as well as a changing client landscape, yet they serve as a central component of our safety net since the closing of DC General. I believe in adequately resourcing them. Primary care is always a better investment than forcing people to rely on emergency rooms for all their healthcare needs; cuts to FQHCs, Alliance, etc., represent short-term savings that come with big long-term costs. As a Councilmember, I will work on multiple fronts to stabilize the funding for our FQHCs. That will include federal advocacy — making the case that these programs are both vital and cost-efficient — as well as identifying local funding streams and mechanisms that can cushion our FQHCs and offset the unpredictability of federal funding over the next few years.

The FY2026 budget also moved thousands of residents with low incomes (at or barely above Medicaid's income eligibility) from Medicaid to a new Basic Health Program with less coverage. This action, which was intended to reduce costs, has resulted in the loss of essential services like dental and vision care. As a Councilmember, I will push for reversing this negative impact, including ensuring that the Basic Health Program has comparable quality of services and coverage.

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**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 support automatically enrolling individuals and families into DC programs for which they are eligible. This could be done in an innovative way to reduce administrative burdens. For example, the DC government could automatically enroll families receiving SNAP benefits (which is an indication of having an extremely low income) into other local programs that provide essential services like Metro Lift's subsidy for WMATA's bus and train fares.

Amid the Trump Administration's push for imposing work requirements for families receiving federal aid like SNAP benefits and housing subsidies, the DC government should both brace for the need to assist DC residents with additional administrative work and to find ways to make it easier and faster to enroll into local programs for eligible families. The government should also provide flexibility in meeting administrative requirements for eligible families experiencing housing instability who may not have access to all required documents.

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

As a cisgender gay man, I acknowledge my privilege and take a higher level of responsibility in creating a safer society and community for my trans and non-binary neighbors. Any space that is unsafe for gay men is even less safe for trans and non-binary residents in DC.

We are not safe unless all of us are safe. I acknowledge that safety means many things: safety from crime, safety from discrimination, safety while crossing the street, safety while patrons are either going to or leaving LGBTQ businesses. Public safety is especially important for LGBTQ+ Washingtonians, who are more likely to be subjected to street violence and discrimination.

As a Councilmember, I will invest in anti-crime measures that actually work, like violence interruption (VI), through better funding, insisting that investments be based on rigorous research and data analysis. I especially support the Violence Prevention and Response Team (VPART) community-centered model that provides public support through community partners. VPART provides educational resources, violence prevention, and real-time response for LGBTQ+ residents in DC impacted by violence, including hate and bias incidents, sexual

violence, harassment, and any related safety concerns. As a Councilmember, I will champion the DC LGBTQ+ Budget Coalition's priority to provide stable and sufficient government funding for VPART, to ensure that local partners can provide violence prevention and response services that are tailored to LGBTQ+ individuals, while integrating VPART into DC's broader public safety agenda.

While I acknowledge and have witnessed the complex relationship between DC's LGBTQ+ community and policing, I will push for re-committing MPD to "community policing," which is a legal obligation to convene a community policing working group and publish a report on community policing every two years. This includes reforming and increasing the efficiency of MPD's system of Citizens Advisory Councils (CAC), which is meant to provide a conduit from the community directly into the police department.

As an ANC Commissioner, I have joined HIPS in public safety walks that included MPD officers and were designed to discuss harm reduction in interactions between police officers and sex workers. I do believe that this model can be replicated and scaled as a "harm reduction" tool until we decriminalize sex work at the federal level (DC can shape local laws and MPD interactions with sex workers, but we still would have to comply with federal laws as a federal district that is not a state).

Regarding the safety of Ward 1's and DC's LGBTQ+ immigrant community, I will introduce legislation to amend the Sanctuary Values Amendment Act, to expand the prohibition on information sharing to cover not only individuals in custody but also those detained, expand the reporting requirements and frequency for MPD, provide protections against warrantless civil immigration enforcement at sensitive locations like hospitals, schools, and places of worship, and prohibit the use of face coverings by law enforcement officers, especially immigration officers. Let's remember why we have sanctuary policies in the first place. They promote community safety by ensuring access to courthouses and police stations without fear of immigration enforcement, as well as preserve our local resources for local priorities, rather than doing ICE's job for them.