

April 22, 2026

**Response of Phil Mendelson  
2026 GLAA Questionnaire**

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

*Yes, I will oppose any effort to infringe on our autonomy. As Chairman of the Council, I have opposed all attempts by Congress and the federal government to reverse our laws or limit our ability to implement certain policies. I believe any attempts to limit our autonomy are a dire threat to Home Rule. For example, congressional Republicans recently attempted to overturn a law we approved that "decoupled" from several provisions in Trump's "One Big Beautiful Bill." I was vocally opposed to the effort to overturn the law, and worked with the Mayor, the Attorney General, and the Council's congressional consulting firm to push back. I have also vocally opposed congressional efforts to disapprove of our police accountability laws, make our criminal legal system more draconian, and limit our ability to use local tax dollars. If re-elected, I will continue to use my position as Chairman to advocate for the utmost autonomy for District residents in concert with my colleagues.*

- 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. We should not have troops patrolling our streets. The deployment of the National Guard is completely unjustifiable and should not be normalized. I supported Attorney General Schwalb's lawsuit against the federal government to end the illegal deployment, and if re-elected, I will continue to support legal challenges against the deployment in whatever way I can.*

- 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 believe our pretrial system must err on the side of liberty absent compelling evidence that a defendant is a danger to a victim or the community at large. I have also been a strong supporter of civil legal aid, particularly the Access to Justice Program, which funds attorneys to represent low-income residents in eviction cases, public benefit cases, and discrimination cases. Each year, the Mayor has slashed the budget for the Access to Justice Program, and each year I have restored the budget to its current level of \$31.7 million. If re-elected, I will continue to be a strong advocate for the Access to Justice Program.*

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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. I believe we should invest more in our continuum of care, including resources specifically for unhoused LGBTQ+ people. Each year, when I develop my budget proposal (committee print) for Council adoption, I invest additional funds into homeless vouchers and the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, as the Mayor often adds no money to these programs or cuts them significantly. If re-elected, I will continue to invest in homeless services funding.*

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

*No. While I support increased investments in local nutrition assistance programs, the District does not have sufficient funding to backfill federal reductions while also addressing other spending pressures. For example, the new cost-sharing requirements in Trump's "One Big Beautiful Bill" will result in the District paying an additional \$48 million each fiscal year at our current error rate. That's nearly \$200 million over the four-year financial plan just to account for the new cost-sharing provision. A better strategy is to pressure the Mayor to reduce the error rate.*

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 have been a strong supporter of renewable energy during my time on Council, as I believe it is the only long-term way to reduce energy costs for households across the District. For example, I have supported increased funding for the Sustainable Energy Trust Fund which supports programs such as Solar for All. Solar for All aims to reduce electricity bills by 50% for 100,000 low- to moderate-income households by 2032.*

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 believe that transgender youth and adults deserve dignity and respect, which includes the ability to access the healthcare that they need, including gender affirming care. If re-elected, I will use my position as Chairman to block any efforts by Congress to weaken laws that protect the healthcare of transgender residents of the District, and I am open to ideas to strengthen the right of transgender people to access the care that they need.*

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?**

*No. While I am disappointed in the cuts to the Alliance and Medicaid (both FY 26 & FY27), the cost of reversing the cuts to either program is too high for the District to cover—even with proposed revenue raisers—while also addressing other spending pressures. For example, it would cost more than \$450 million over 4 years just to restore cuts to the Alliance. However, I will do what I can to restore cuts in local funds for these programs.*

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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 believe we should reduce administrative burdens on social safety programs as much as possible, as these burdens deter people in need from accessing these benefits. If re-elected, I will work with my colleagues to make tweaks to our locally funded programs that will enable people to more easily obtain benefits, such as through categorical eligibility.*

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

*No. While I support funding violence prevention activities, such as the Pathways Program at the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, I do not support decriminalizing sex work. However, when I chaired the Judiciary Committee I significantly reduced the possible criminal penalties for prostitution; I recognize that sex workers are often victims themselves, such as of trafficking. If re-elected, I will continue to support investments in violence prevention programs because that is an important public safety strategy. Better investments are important, too. Our budgeting thus far has had too little nexus to best practices.*

*Phil Mendon*  
*April 22, 2026*