

Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, DC

2010 Questionnaire for D.C. Mayor Candidates

Kwame Brown

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

1. Will you oppose any effort to hold an initiative in the District that would take away the civil marriage rights now enjoyed by same-sex couples, and publicly campaign for marriage equality in the event such an initiative is held?

Yes, I will oppose any efforts to have a voter initiative in the District that would take away the civil marriage rights now enjoyed by same-sex couples. The battle for marriage equality was the result of a lot of hard work over decades and its passage was a major civil rights victory. I am proud to have cast a vote in support of both recognizing marriages performed in other jurisdictions and granting civil marriage rights here in the District.

2. If the District's civil marriage equality is taken away either directly by an act of Congress or by a ballot measure, will you support immediate re-passage of civil marriage equality?

Yes, if the District's civil marriage equality is taken away by Congress or through a ballot initiative, I will support immediate re-passage of marriage equality.

3. Do you agree that private contractors doing business with the District should be required to provide equal benefits including health insurance to same-sex partners?

Yes, I agree that private contractors conducting business with the District must provide equal benefits to same-sex partners, including health insurance.

4. Will you oppose legislation containing either a "conscience clause" that would allow anyone to claim a Human Rights Act exemption at will, as was proposed by Councilmember Yvette Alexander during consideration of the marriage equality bill last year; or a "business necessity" exemption that would allow taxpayer-funded charities run by religious groups to discriminate against married same-sex couples, as was proposed by the Archdiocese of Washington?

I absolutely oppose legislation allowing a "conscience clause" and/or a "business necessity" exemption that would allow taxpayer-funded charities run by religious groups to discriminate against married same-sex couples and circumvent District law.

PUBLIC HEALTH

5. Do you support sufficient funding to ensure that the drive to make HIV testing routine among District residents includes counseling and treatment referrals for those testing positive?

Yes, I support sufficient funding to ensure that routine HIV testing among District residents includes counseling and treatment referrals for individuals testing positive.

6. Are you committed to continuing and expanding the District's condom distribution program to include water-based lubricant and tracking of their distribution to specified locations?

Yes.

7. Will you support legislation giving the directors of the Office of GLBT Affairs and the Office of African Affairs the authority to issue competitive grants as other minority constituent offices have, that will be open to organizations serving the populations within the offices' purview?

Yes, I support legislation giving the directors of the Office of GLBT Affairs and the Office of African Affairs the authority to issue competitive grants, which will be open to organizations serving the populations within those offices' purview. The grants from those two offices will be advertised through the Office of Partnerships and Grants' website and through that office's weekly emails, just as other competitive District grants are advertised. In light of the recent budget cuts affecting funding to social service organizations in the city, the issuance of competitive grants by these two offices will meet needs not currently funded by the city.

8. Describe steps you will support to improve performance at the HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD, and TB Administration (HAHSTA), including in HIV prevention, HIV/AIDS surveillance, and mental health services.

It is important that the Department of Health and community based organizations work collaboratively to share resources, information, and to better reach their targeted population.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE JUDICIARY

9. Will you support funding for mandatory lesbian, gay bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) sensitivity and diversity training for all members of the Metropolitan Police Department and the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department?

The death of Tyra Hunter in 1995 revealed the dire need for sensitivity and diversity training for the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department. Since that time, LGBT sensitivity and diversity training has occurred at the Fire/EMS and at MPD. However, MPD and Fire/EMS must continue the sensitivity and diversity training for new recruits and as a refresher for the current officers and staff. The continued mistreatment of transgender residents by MPD and the incident reported by Sampson McCormick in which officers allegedly made homophobic remarks to LGBT residents underscore the need for this mandatory training.

10. Will you support a budget for the Office of Police Complaints large enough to avoid developing a backlog of cases?

Yes.

11. Will you support efforts to rein in police officials who respond to legitimate crime concerns with unsustainable, media-centric quick fixes that infringe constitutionally protected civil liberties? And will you do so without waiting for courts to overturn them, as the U.S. Court of Appeals did to the Neighborhood Safety Zone initiative in 2009?

Yes. Whether there is a pending court case or not, I will work with the Mayor in using the Council's legislative authority to protect District residents' rights and use the bully pulpit of the Council Chair's office to speak out against efforts to infringe on those rights.

12. Will you support maintaining the award-winning Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit with both a citywide scope and a dedicated and well-trained central core unit with a full-time sergeant?

Yes, I fully support maintaining the GLLU with both a city-wide scope and a dedicated, well-trained central core. While I believe that every officer in the city should be equipped to handle the concerns of LGBT residents, having a central core unit with a full-time sergeant has benefits, such as accountability and unit cohesion.

13. Will you press for increased oversight of the Metropolitan Police Department's gathering and analysis of crime statistics to ensure greater comprehensiveness and objectivity, including transgender-related hate crime data?

Yes, I will press for increased oversight of MPD's gathering and analysis of crime statistics to ensure greater comprehensiveness and objectivity, including transgender-related hate crime data. Too often, crimes committed against the transgender community are underreported, due in part to the poor analysis of crime statistics. The other piece is that without a centralized GLLU, transgender residents may not feel as comfortable reporting crimes to the MPD, even bias-based crimes.

14. Do you support making the D.C. Attorney General an elected position?

Yes.

HUMAN RIGHTS

15. Will you support a budget for the Office of Human Rights large enough to allow it to keep the backlog at below 70 aged cases; keep below 210 days the average time it takes to issue a probable cause finding; and expand education, prevention, and language access efforts?

Yes, I support the OHR having a budget sufficiently large enough to keep the backlog of cases below 70, keep the average time to issue a probable cause finding to below 210, and to expand education, prevention and language access areas.

16. Will you block ceremonial resolutions and otherwise decline to honor individuals or organizations that promote any sort of bigotry?

Yes, I do not agree that ceremonial resolutions should be issued for or honors given to individuals and organizations that promote any sort of bigotry, especially as a core tenet.

17. Are you committed to including a transgender representative on the D.C. Commission on Human Rights?

Yes.

18. Do you agree that the Director of the Office of Human Rights should be required to have professional training and experience in civil rights law enforcement?

No, I would prefer that the Director of OHR has experience and professional training in civil rights law enforcement, but do not think it should be a requirement, as long as the individual has commensurate experience.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND YOUTH

19. Will you oppose both federal and local voucher programs that fund students in religious schools that are beyond the protections of the D.C. Human Rights Act?

Yes, I will continue to oppose both federal and local voucher programs that fund students in religious schools that fall outside the protections of the D.C. Human Rights Act; however students who currently receive vouchers should be able to retain them so that they may complete their education.

20. Will you support improved services and treatment for gay and transgender homeless youth, including transitional housing?

Yes, I will support improved services and treatment opportunities for gay and transgender homeless youth, including transitional housing. When the Wanda Alston House opened in 2008 with the help of the DC Department of Human Services and the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness, it was a major step forward in providing comprehensive services for a population at great risk – LGBT youth. The issue now is that there is a need for 5-6 more transitional houses for LGBT youth.

21. Will you oppose the use of either federal or District taxpayer funds to promote “abstinence only until marriage” sex education that undermines safer-sex programs by excluding more comprehensive information?

Yes, “abstinence only until marriage” sex education has proven to be ineffective and leaves youth without valuable information that can prevent pregnancy and, more importantly, save their lives. I oppose such programs, especially when federal or District taxpayer funds are used to finance them.

CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES

22. Do you support the right of adults in the District to choose adult-oriented entertainment for themselves, and the right of appropriately licensed and zoned businesses to provide it?

Yes, I support the right of adults in the District to choose adult-oriented entertainment for themselves. As long as such entertainment is appropriately zoned and licensed, I also support the right of those businesses to provide adult-oriented entertainment.

23. Will you support legislation to curb abuses by NIMBYs who are now allowed to file an endless series of baseless complaints to harass or extort bars and restaurants?

I will support legislation to curb endless, baseless complaints by any group designed to harass or extort bars, restaurants and other businesses.

24. What are your thoughts regarding GLAA's proposal, explained in Agenda: 2010, to mitigate the problems associated with prostitution by legalizing and regulating it? What will you do to provide alternatives to survival sex for at-risk populations like homeless youth and transgenders?

I do not support the legalization of prostitution. Our homeless, youth and transgender populations are entitled to receive the support needed to minimize the need for survival sex.

My Record on LGBT Issues Since Being Elected to the DC Council

* On April 7, 2009, I voted in favor of recognizing same-sex marriages performed in other jurisdictions. I was also a co-sponsor on that bill.

* On December 15, 2009, I voted in favor of marriage equality in the District.

Your record is part of your rating. Please list any actions that you have taken that may help illustrate your record on behalf of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders.

Your answers should be typed on separate paper rather than on this form. You must sign your name on each answer sheet to indicate your personal commitment to your answers.

Please return your signed questionnaire responses by Tuesday, August 17 to GLAA, P.O. Box 75265, Washington, D.C. 20013.

In addition to sending your signed hard copy, please email a copy (in any major word processor or text format) for loading on GLAA's website (www.glaa.org) to equal@glaa.org. Thank you.

Signature _____