

**Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of
Washington, DC
2010 Questionnaire for D.C. Council Candidates**

Vincent Orange

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 fight with the DC LGBT community against any efforts to reverse the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Amendment Act in Congress, the Courts and any other forum. Additionally, I have pledged my support to publicly support and facilitate a Ward 5 and/or city wide forum on marriage equality with the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, the Human Rights Campaign and the DC Coalition to change the hearts and minds of those who still not support full equal rights.

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, I will fight with the LGBT community against any efforts to reverse the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Amendment Act in Congress, the Courts and any other forum.

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. While Vice President at Pepco, Pepco did not provide benefits to domestic partners or civil unions. I immediately had this changed and benefits are provided. Private contractors doing business with DC should provide equal benefits to same-sex partners.

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?

Yes

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, stakeholders need to work together to ensure that we get all the federal funding and other sources available to run a comprehensive testing, referral, counseling and treatment program to deal with the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the District of Columbia. I will work with community and faith based groups in the District to educate residents on HIV/AIDS information programs.

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. I met with David Mariner at the DC Center and learned first hand the tremendous impact their own HIV Working Group and condom distribution has on the community and the little resources they have to do it with. It appears that condom distribution in public high schools is an issue that I would address sooner rather than later.

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 giving the Office of GLBT Affairs and the Office of African Affairs grant making authority with the appropriate oversight and transparency. As you know, I, as Chairman of the Committee on Government Operations, along with Councilmember Jim Graham introduced and supported legislation making the Office of GLBT Affairs permanent.

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.

I will hold the Administration accountable, like all agencies, and assess their performance through oversight hearings. Depending on the outcomes I will take the necessary steps to ensure that their services are up to par.

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?

Yes, sensitivity and diversity training are both essential elements for all DC workforce employees for the benefit of all DC residents. However, the District has an award winning GLLU, one of the only LGBT related units in the country, and we need to continue keeping this unit in place.

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

I would need to assess the current status and procedures of the Office of Police Complaints first and assess why there is a backlog. If due to lack of funding I would do my utmost best to find the resources to support an appropriate budget.

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, yes.

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!

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 have always been strong on aggressive oversight and will hold the other councilmembers accountable on diligent oversight as well to make sure that agencies and departments are in compliance and doing their job.

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?

I agree that OHR should have sufficient funding and appropriate staffing levels so backlogs will be kept at a minimum and findings are issued sooner. However, I would have to review the budget for the OHR and evaluate if their funding is sufficient so they can do their work in a timely manner or if other issues besides funding are at play. I always support education, prevention and language access efforts and will ensure that efforts increase, but more importantly are effective.

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

Yes

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

Yes I am committed to include a qualified transgender representative on the Human Rights Commission.

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?

Yes. In addition, sensitivity and diversity training are both essential elements for all DC workforce employees for the benefit of all DC residents.

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

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

Yes, there is a tremendous need for services, including improved services, and affordable and transitional housing. I think oversight and partnerships with non for profits that work with this population is important.

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?

It is clear from all the statistics and research that safer-sex education in appropriate grades is a crucial element in teaching overall sexual health. Comprehensive information leads to making more informed decisions and behavior and that’s what folks need to be doing. As always, knowledge is power.

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, key is “appropriately licensed and zoned businesses” Furthermore, compliance by these businesses needs to be enforced.

23. Will you support legislation to curb abuses by NIMBYs (not in my backyard) who are now allowed to file an endless series of baseless complaints to harass or extort bars and restaurants?

Yes

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?

The proposal explained in Agenda 2010 to legalize, regulate, zone and tax prostitution sounds like a logical one. I know Amsterdam (The Netherlands) was one of the first cities that legalized, regulated, zoned, and taxed it and unionized its sex workers. A little research shows it is working. Why not start the conversation in the District of Columbia. It will be a long hard battle but one worth fighting. I agree that we need to support the people that practice survival sex with drop in centers, counseling, mental health services and STD testing/treatment, addiction recovery programs, job training and affordable housing. I would take the lead from organizations that work with at-risk populations to develop and implement a comprehensive plan that is effective.

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.