

David Schwartzman, City Council At-Large Candidate, DC Statehood Green Party

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

My answers

1. Yes, the human rights of a minority should never be put up for referendum! This point is the essence of the historic opinion of U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn Walker which overturned Prop 8, a tremendous victory for human rights.

2. Yes, again.

3. Of course.

4. Yes, I would oppose such legislation.

5. Yes. But ensuring such funding is the challenge we must confront. First federal funding should be aggressively pursued. But local funding must be boosted by restructuring our DC taxes, making them both progressive and more capable of generating revenue for essential programs by a modest tax hike for wealthy residents and by curbing corporate welfare such as unjustified tax abatements and exemptions. For my tax/revenue plan go to: www.dcstatehoodgreen.org/testimony/fairtax

6. Yes. Free or low cost contraceptive services, including counseling, should be provided in all District health care facilities. Further, this service should be widely advertised in public places, such as Metro, and on radio and TV. Free condoms should be widely distributed in public high schools, with instruction on their proper use. Education in safe and responsible sex emphasizing gender equality and respect for the diversity of sexual preference should be mandatory in public schools and other facilities.

7. Yes.

8. First of all, we need competent and consistent leadership in the HIV/AIDS Administration. The resignation of Shannon Hader in July, a very well-respected public health administrator, was a serious setback in DC's efforts to control what is the worst epidemic of HIV in the country. The first priority is strong and effective leadership in this position.

The following steps should be taken to address the HIV epidemic in DC, which is a top public health priority:

- Expand syringe exchange programs, which for too long were delayed by the US Congress, leading to massive increases in HIV transmission.
- Adopt and monitor implementation of standards for HIV prevention efforts in the DC public schools, including charter schools.
- Address continuing funding shortfalls and waiting lists at APRA to ensure that drug treatment is available upon demand in DC.
- The criminalization of drug use contributes to the spread of HIV. Nearly five thousand people were arrested in DC last year on drug charges, twenty percent of all arrests. In November 2002, an overwhelming 78 percent of DC voters passed the drug treatment initiative, Measure 62. Under Measure 62 the city would provide substance abuse treatment instead of conviction or imprisonment to nonviolent defendants charged with illegal possession or use of drugs (except those drugs classified as Schedule I); provide a plan for rehabilitation to individuals accepted for substance abuse treatment; and provide for dismissal of legal proceedings for

defendants upon successful completion of the treatment program. The goals of Measure 62 are widely supported by DC residents, and its implementation is long over due!

- In the FY2011 budget, the DC Department of Corrections will no longer provide a 7-day supply of medications upon release. This short-sighted decision must be reversed. While incarcerated, people should have access to the best HIV care available, as well as access to condoms, which is generally the case now. Upon release, they should be provided not only with an adequate supply of medicines, but must be directly connected with community resources to continue treatment.
- Housing and other services for people HIV and other serious medical conditions must be de-politicized. Cronyism in distribution of federal and local funds for HIV must be ended.
- DC's Healthcare Alliance system for providing health insurance for uninsured residents must be better monitored and expanded to serve a wider swath of the population. As unemployment rises, more and more people are losing access to health insurance, including those with chronic health conditions. No one in DC should be without access to quality health care. I support a single-payer health care system and will work to mobilize political support for this option, the only meaningful health care reform option. We need not wait for the federal government to act. We should implement our local single-payer program asap (the DC Statehood Green Party proposed this step several years ago).
- The privatized mental health system is often chaotic and wasteful of public funds. The elimination of government-provided mental health treatment in DC has left many people without access to services. I support a reformed, consumer-responsive public mental health system.

9. Yes, This training is long overdue. Note that racist and homophobic harassment against firefighters and trainees was documented in the Fire and EMS Department (see abolishracism.blogspot.com; as a DC Statehood Green, I have spoken out several times at ERASE rallies on this issue). Incident involving the EMS and a black transgendered person should also be noted. I note that Chief Rubin has apparently made progress in addressing these concerns.

10. Yes, full funding is mandatory.

11. Yes. I testified to the City Council on this issue on June 18, 2008, on behalf of the DC Statehood Green Party: http://www.dcstatehoodgreen.org/testimony/public_safety_civil_liberties

A selection: "The City Council likewise should be held accountable for not acting to investigate and take appropriate action to insure full respect of civil rights and liberties of our residents. Is the unconstitutional implementation of police checkpoints in Trinidad neighborhood a surprise given the history of police violations of civil rights and liberties? I think not. Two recent examples of abuse of police powers: Former Police Chief Ramsey ordered illegal mass arrests and lockdown of hundreds of anti-corporate globalization protesters and even bystanders who happened to be in Pershing Park, in September 2002. ...The pattern of numerous police killings of District youth in recent years is much more serious, most recently resulting in the death of a 14 year, DeOnté Rawlings, in September, 2007, by an off duty policeman. District policy in such cases has simply consisted of internal review by the Police Department. Rather, such killings and allegations of police brutality should be investigated by a fully independent Civilian Review Board accountable to the public."

Yes again.

12. Yes.

13. Yes. Further, in addition to robust Executive and City Council oversight, we need a Civilian Review Board to hold MPD accountable.

14. Yes, of course. The D.C. Attorney General should not be the lawyer for the Mayor, but rather serve the public interest.

15. Yes, full funding and staffing for the Office of Human Rights is needed to implement this objective. Good laws are necessary but not sufficient unless timely implementation is possible.
16. Yes. Homophobia, racism, sexism, and ageism must be opposed at every opportunity.
17. Yes. Long overdue.
18. Yes. I was not impressed with the Director's remarks at a meeting of the DC Human Rights City Campaign a couple of years ago. He gave an undeserved rosy picture of the status of human rights in the District of Columbia.
19. Yes. I support the strict separation of church and state.
20. Yes, but again the funding issue must be addressed. A vigorous campaign for full funding for these services and other basic needs should be organized.
21. Yes, by all means. Abstinence only sex education is not only ineffective but an assault on the separation of church and state because it is the self-serving agenda of the Christian Right and homophobic organizations.
22. Yes. I oppose the hypocritical censorship of self-proclaimed adjudicators of what is so-called moral behavior. I also support full rights for workers in these businesses, as well as sex workers, for job protection, benefits, protection against harassment, and the right to organize into trade unions. Workers in adult businesses deserve all the same rights and protections that all other working people deserve.
23. Yes. I will support legislation that would require such disputes to be mediated and resolved. Specific case must be examined on their own merits. I do support reasonable restrictions on liquor store expansion.
24. Yes, this is an approach like the decriminalization of drug use. An end to the drug war is long overdue. Further, we need to integrate this approach with firm protection against the international and domestic sex trade network. I support unionization of sex workers. Of course survival sex should be discouraged by a fully funded wrap around program providing emergency shelter (reopen Franklin Shelter!), treatment for substance abuse, affordable housing and job training.

I have participated in the struggle against homophobia starting as a graduate student at Brown University in the 1960s and early 1970s. In the mid 1980s I attended national gay rights demonstrations at the Mall, the Millennium/HRC March in 2000 and numerous actions since. I supported Initiative 59 and participated in several DC ACT-UP events including the funeral march for Steve Michael to the White House. I am proud of my national Green and DC Statehood Green Party's vigorous support for human rights for GLBT people. I am a longstanding member and active participant of the Fair Budget Coalition as well as a Steering Committee member of the DC Human Rights People's Movement (follow up of the December 2008 official declaration of Washington DC as a Human Rights City). For the last 15 years I have testified at DC City Council hearings for full funding of social services including substance abuse treatment and for a progressive restructuring of DC taxes and other measures to make this possible (for my recent testimony go to:

<http://www.dcstatehoodgreen.org/testimony/home>).

My campaign URL: <http://www.davidschwartzman.com>