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

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?

*I will stand with GLAA and oppose any attempt to impose a ban on same-sex marriage, whether by Congress or others. I agree with Chief Justice Earl Warren when he stated that the "freedom to marry has long been recognized as one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men." Furthermore, I will publicly campaign for marriage equality in the face of any opposition effort.*

*I believe that marriage should be a protected civil right and moreover, that it is a private act between two consenting adults that desire to further their emotional bond. The District should not stand in the face of such a noble and admirable act.*

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 support the immediate re-passage of civil marriage equality if the District's civil marriage equality is taken away by an act of Congress or by a ballot measure. The road to civil marriage may be arduous, full of fits and starts, but it is worth the struggle. I am convinced that our democratic society arcs toward more equality, more opportunity, and more freedom and the District's civil marriage equality measures are part of that movement.*

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?

*Economic development is an essential part of any thriving society. In these difficult economic times, all measures should be taken to promote vigorous, responsible growth within the District. Private contractors should be encouraged to adopt and promote the civil safeguards that the District has passed to protect its public employees. District*

*residents should not be required to choose their level of protection based on their employment source.*

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, I will oppose any and all legislation designed to lessen the impact or malign the intent of the marriage equality bill.*

## **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?

*Despite being the capitol of arguably the most prosperous nation in the world, the rate of HIV/AIDS infection in the District is comparable to some sub-Saharan countries. This is unacceptable. The HIV/AIDS epidemic in the District is a public health emergency and should be treated as such.*

*I support strong HIV/AIDS prevention programs, public health facilities equipped for the special needs of HIV/AIDS patients, and comprehensive support services which necessarily include testing and pre- and post-testing counseling services. Along with direct tangible measures, it is paramount that we remove the stigma that accompanies HIV. I believe that HIV/AIDS testing should be part of routine physicals for District residents and this is only possible when fear no longer accompanies the disease.*

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 am committed to continuing and expanding the District’s condom distribution program to include water-based lubricant. Condom distribution is a vital part of any viable HIV/AIDS prevention program, and given the District’s alarming rate of HIV/AIDS infection, we should employ any and every measure to prevent the spread of this disease.*

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?

*I believe that every possible measure should be employed to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. That includes creative grant-making designed to target adversely impacted populations that may lie outside of the mainstream prevention and treatment arenas. This disease requires an "All Hands on Deck" mentality to stop its progression throughout our community and I welcome any organization that is willing to put its shoulder to the wheel.*

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.

*HAHSTA serves a valuable, indispensable service for District residents living with HIV/AIDS. Given its mission, it should be efficient, as well as, effective. To improve HAHSTA's performance, I would suggest a top-to-bottom review, relying on internal and external opinions, to eradicate waste and redundancy. HAHSTA's mission is too critical for it not to perform at optimum levels.*

## **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, I support funding for mandatory lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender sensitivity and diversity training for all members of the Metropolitan Police Department and the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department. MPD and FEMS perform an invaluable service to the District by protecting its citizens and ensuring their safety. In order to perform this job more effectively, a thorough knowledge and understanding of all of the diverse sections of the District community is necessary. Sensitivity training can only help them do their jobs better.*

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

*Yes, it is important that justice is swift. The victims of crimes or misconduct should not have to suffer any more mistreatment due to inefficiency or lack of resources.*

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, I will support efforts to rein in police officials that conduct themselves in an inappropriately manner. Once again, I believe the District has an obligation not to contribute to the further mistreatment of victims of crime. Unnecessary delays and insincere responses only serve to continue the victimization of our citizens.*

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 will support maintaining the award-winning Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit by providing a full-time sergeant and increasing its scope to be citywide. The unit is award-winning for a reason and we should build upon its success.*

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?

*It is important that crime statistics are accurate because dollars often follow numbers. If the crime statistics for the District are disproportionately underreported for transgender-related hate crimes, we may underestimate the severity of their problems and inadvertently neglect a significant segment of our community.*

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

*I support the selection of a non-partisan, impartial D.C. Attorney General. I believe that the enforcement and interpretation of the law should not be a political endeavor.*

## 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?

*Human rights are essential, unalienable, and God-given. The Office of Human Rights should have a budget that is large enough to ensure that it can perform its mission to the best of its ability. Keeping the backlog below 70 aged cases, below 210 days the average times it takes to issue a probable cause finding and expanding education, prevention, and language access efforts are admirable and noteworthy goals that we should support.*

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

*The District should honor individuals that accomplish outstanding feats or demonstrate exemplary service to the District. Acts of bigotry do not fall in this category.*

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

*The transgender community deserves a representative on the D.C. Commission on Human Rights. Their issues are legitimate and should be viewed with equal importance as their counterparts.*

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?

*Professional training and experience in civil rights law enforcement will only increase the effectiveness of the Office of Human Rights. I support this measure wholeheartedly.*

## **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?

*Children, as well as adults, learn in a variety of ways. I support multiple paths and techniques to the attainment of a quality education. Educational facilities should be inclusive, but more importantly, conducive to optimum learning. If certain religious schools are beyond the protections of the D.C. Human Rights Act, they should be encouraged to implement its tenets.*

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

*Yes, I will. Gay and transgender homeless youth should be privy to all of the rights and privileges of their straight counterparts. If they have experienced unfortunate circumstances that have caused them to utilize transitional housing, they should have that option available to them.*

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?

*Any HIV/AIDS prevention message should include multiple approaches. Prevention is not a “one size fits all” phenomenon. Abstinence should be taught as part of the prevention continuum, not the entire platform.*

## 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?

*Adults have to ability to make responsible choices when it comes to their entertainment choices. However, adult-oriented entertainment venues should respect the current licensing and zoning regulations and remain a respective distance from churches and schools. I have no problem with adult entertainment choices provided that the choices are legal. Additionally, adult entertainment venues may add to the District’s coffers.*

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

*Frivolous and baseless complaints unnecessarily clog the legal system and prevent the effective adjudication of legitimate cases. I will support legislation to curb these abuses.*

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?

*There would be no need for survival sex in a society where people are celebrated for their differences. As councilmember, I will actively work for an inclusive DC. Until that*

*day comes, I support the measures mentioned in GLAA's Agenda: 2010 such as the creation of drop-in centers, transitional housing, job training, counseling, addiction recovery programs, mental health services, and STD testing and treatment for at-risk populations.*