

Gay and Lesbian Alliance of Washington D.C.
2012 Questionnaire for
Ward 5 Council Candidates

Responses by Rae Zapata

Marriage and Family

1. In the event of a congressional action leading to a ballot initiative in the District of Columbia that would be aimed to take away the civil marriage rights now enjoyed by same-sex couples, I will both oppose any such initiative and publicly defend civil marriage equality.

Public Health

2. I will support the directors of the Office of GLBT Affairs and the Office of African Affairs to issue competitive grants as other minority constituent offices are authorized to do. This policy initiative must be open and transparent providing an equal opportunity to all organizations serving populations within the aforesaid offices' purview.

3. I will defend the District's existing medical marijuana program from revocation. While I recognize the need for cultivation centers it is essential that each ward participate in this important program that will help our seriously ill citizens. There are opportunities for entrepreneurs all over the District of Columbia.

4. I believe that the key to improving the city's performance in the areas of Public Health, in general, and infectious diseases including, but limited to HIV/AIDS, TB, Hepatitis, and STDs, is the formation of a centralized clearinghouse for information for care-providers, aggressive public information campaigns, the use of mobile testing clinics, and monthly screening/health fairs that target the demographic sectors most adversely at risk of poor health. Further, I would like to work with local artists and media personalities to develop public health campaigns that will reach the youth and other marginalized residents of the city that are most at risk.

Public Safety and Judiciary

5. I will use the full powers of my office to demand that crime statistics be more thoroughly compiled by the Metropolitan Washington Police Department (MWPDP) and the data be analyzed and appropriately quantified to make certain that the rights of all citizens be protected. Also, I am willing to be a part of creating a bi-annual committee to review and study which demographic groups need more protection and legislation if necessary to protect their rights. I would be willing to have the MWPDP work with the FBI and other investigative federal agencies to make certain that the MWPDP's analysis of its crime statistics (with special attention devoted to gender issues) is given an added layer of overview as a quality control measure and to see how our city measures up to other large municipalities. Finally, I would like to see an annual white paper on intolerance, gender discrimination, and crime in the District presented to the Mayor,

Chief of Police, and Office of GLBT Affairs in a meeting open to the public. We can use such a document to chart the annual progress or lack thereof in tackling bigotry and hate in our city.

6. I support funds being earmarked to have our MWPD's officers trained by certified trainers so that they can fully understand and respect the people they have sworn to protect, and so that they can demonstrate competence and sensitivity when confronted with domestic and intimate partner violence.

7. I am opposed to policing based on profiling or harassing of all persons. My personal record demonstrates this. In defending the rights of all citizens, I have to respect homeowners, parents, and residents that want their streets safe. As a public servant, I believe that it is important to listen to all the citizens and not solely one side of a question that impacts the quality of life of taxpaying citizens of the city. All prostitution presents a myriad array of issues both legal and health related that the city can ill-afford. I think that the issue of Prostitution Free Zones should be determined by it being placed on the ballot, and the voters decide how they want their officials to address this concern.

I will research this law to understand it more thoroughly. I will say, that I would support making sure that this law and others like it are not used to profile and abuse District residents.

Human Rights

8. I agree that the Director of the Office on Human Rights should be required to have professional training and a background related to civil rights law enforcement and compliance. It would probably be in the best interest that the director has a law degree.

Youth and Seniors

9. I believe in the separation of church and state and freedom of religion. I also believe that parents reserve the right to have their children educated in an environment that affirms their religious beliefs. In terms of education, I am a strong proponent of public education, and the District of Columbia Public Schools are required by law to comply with the rules and regulations of the D.C. Human Rights Act. My support or opposition on how federal and local voucher program funds are used would require my knowing the full ramification of how these disbursements impact students and families. If there are clear challenges to the existing law, I would, as a person sworn to uphold the law, have to oppose policies that violate the D.C. Human Rights Act, and this would be balanced by the need to support District residents affording their children the kind of education that they think best suits them.

10. Abstinence until married programs, while having well-intended goals, have a religious bent that muddies the waters of church and state separation. Human sexuality and sex education needs to be shared with young people and persons trying to understand themselves. As a person who supports the sovereignty of the District of Columbia, I find persons promoting extreme sectarian ideas both unhelpful and counterproductive to the aims of persons who are working hard to educate young people living in the Metropolitan area. I cannot support parties or 'cultural warriors' imposing their agenda on District citizens that have had no input in how such

programs are introduced in the city. I support the existing programs that provide a full-spectrum of information that allows young people to know about their bodies and their options to protect themselves. We need the funds, but I would fight to insure that such funds are used to provide comprehensive information for our youth and seniors.

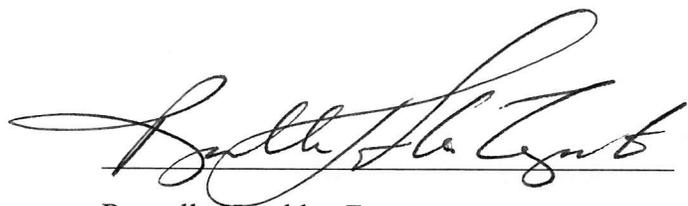
11. I believe that we should respect the letter and spirit of the law to provide equal protection of all legally married couples. I would be open to looking at the provisions of legislation that ensured Medicaid spousal impoverishment protections.

Customers and Businesses

12. I believe that adults have rights and responsibilities in terms of how they choose to entertain themselves. Where the proper licenses are obtained within the appropriate zones and in full compliance of the law, these businesses have the right to exist. I think the issues of what one ward wants or accepts might vary, so I will refrain from supporting legislation that is not reflective of a consensus reached by the council. 'Adult entertainment' establishments have a great challenge of pleasing their patrons and their communities. Supporting these businesses wholesale without reservation and community feedback would be premature and dismissive of District residents who may oppose such entities, and privileging the interests of a few over that of the majority.

13. I am wholly opposed to extortion and abuse of businesses in Washington. I would be open to supporting balanced and carefully crafted legislation that protects businesses from harassment.

14. I would like to partner with local universities to use graduate students and Allied Health and Social Work professionals to create a mechanism to provide an alternative to the incarceration of at-risk and marginal populations that engage in sex work to support themselves. I would also support more group homes with an education/vocation/employment training component to assist homeless youth. The need for jobs is essential, therefore the Council must work to insure the employment of District residents by companies that are awarded government funds or get government tax advantages.



Raenelle Humbles Zapata