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GLAA 2013 Questionnaire

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MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

- 1. In the event of congressional action leading to a ballot initiative in the District that would take away the civil marriage rights now enjoyed by same-sex couples, will you publicly oppose the initiative and defend civil marriage equality?**

Yes, I have and will. I was an active proponent of the "RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND CIVIL MARRIAGE EQUALITY AMENDMENT ACT OF 2009" while it was under consideration of passage. As Chair of ANC5C, I led my commission in support of the Act through a resolution in favor of marriage equality. As Chair of the DC Democratic Party, I led equal efforts to have the State Committee, which approved, and its affiliated organizations to endorse the bill's passage through similar resolutions. This was a successful effort to show the grassroots support of equality.

If any Congressional intrusion attempted to repeal marriage equality legislation through an initiative or through federal legislation such as an amendment to an appropriations bill, I will not only actively participate against such measures but I will use my considerable resources to raise funds and will lead in organizing a campaign to defeat such an initiative that would take away an individual's civil rights. Additionally, I will actively lobby the members of Congress and utilize my position as an Executive Board member of the Democratic National Committee and petition other State Party leaders and members of Congress to speak out against such a blatantly bigoted effort.

- 2. Will you support Bill 20-0032, the Surrogacy Parenting Agreement Act of 2013, to legalize surrogacy agreements in the District and protect all parties to such agreements?**

Yes. I am a proud co-sponsor of the "SURROGACY PARENTING AGREEMENT ACT OF 2013". As a member of the Judiciary and Public Safety Committee, I will support the legislation throughout the committee process and support it publicly during a roundtable hearing and in the Committee of the Whole. We are fortunate that science has advanced where we can safely conduct medically assisted reproduction. As a mother, I cherish and appreciate the joys and tribulations of parenting and understand the dedication needed in raising a child and creating a family. I believe we should protect this dedication with legislation ensuring the binding legal status of the parent and/or parents.

PUBLIC HEALTH

- 3. 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 was the Constituent Services Director in the Anthony Williams administration when the office of LGBT Affairs was enacted and I understand the unique needs the LGBTQ office and other constituency offices have in serving their communities. I fully support each office to conduct their own grant making authority as long as the process remains transparent, competitive and has checks and balances to ensure the taxpayer's funds are properly spent. Our city is great because of its wonderfully diverse population and our government should encourage and celebrate this diversity with appropriate funding based on the communities' population and needs.

- 4. Will you defend the District's hard-won and life-saving medical marijuana program against attacks or further restrictions, whether from Congress, federal officials or D.C. officials?**

Yes. DC voted overwhelmingly in favor (69%) of the "Legalization of Marijuana for Medical Treatment Initiative of 1998" and this local democratically voter-approved initiative was callously not permitted to be implemented by Congress through the Barr Amendment.

As of now, the "LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT AMENDMENT ACT OF 2010" has not experienced a similar fate. I believe the District correctly weighed these considerations strongly during the process of licensing and implementation of the law and feel we must remain vigilant, especially during the next few months when distribution commences to gauge the reaction from those who would attempt to overturn the program. Elected officials must ensure that our local and federal law enforcement officials will not arrest or prosecute patients with legally obtained prescriptions.

I have many dear friends who succumbed to AIDS and cancer and I will fight to protect what science has proven as a beneficial treatment.

- 5. 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.**

As a member of the Committee on Health, one of the first meetings I arranged was with DC Director of Health, Dr. Saul M. Levin where we discussed the city's efforts to eradicate sexually transmitted diseases. I am encouraged by his stewardship of the agency and the fact that our city has one of the most aggressive testing and treatment programs in the country, thanks in part to the aggressive leadership of Councilmember David Catania, but I remain equally alarmed at the prevalence of the high rate of infection of HIV/AIDS, especially within our African American population.

I will vote to increase funding for these needed programs to administer increased testing and prevention efforts through public advocacy campaigns, and will support targeted campaigns aimed towards high risk populations, seniors and teens. I believe the creation of public/private partnerships will help us to reach these goals.

I also support full funding for the education, treatment, and management of sexually transmitted diseases and I consider wrap around services, including depression and mental health services, an integral component of successfully improving a patient's health.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUDICIARY

6. 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. Even with the reduction of homicides in the city, preventing crime is one of my main priorities. A best practice to prevent crime is to understand the rational and pattern. This is obtained through proper gathering and analysis.

I fully support continuing in-depth training and follow-up training for all officers. Faulty data occurs when one officer reports aspects of a crime differently than another for the same crime. As a member of the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, I will work with Chief Lanier and Chairman Wells to establish a uniform manual on the proper way to record crime, victim, suspect, and witness data, including all officers respecting and reporting of the individual's sexual identity.

Also, the MPD must do a better job at making statistics and data available in real time. Currently, their website's crime map is inoperable and the crime statistics data is only updated to 2011.

7. Will you support funding for MPD to hire or contract qualified trainers to provide LGBT inclusive cultural competency training including the handling of intimate partner violence?

Yes. The MPD's duty is to protect all the people, regardless of differences and I believe we must fund these needed programs to erase the stigma and misperceptions of the LGBTQ community. We cannot just accept sensitivity training to occur yearly or when a new cadet is to be inducted into the force but we must increase funding to allow continuing year round training for all government employees that serve the public, including Fire/EMS. We also need to make funds available to continue the training in the field, not just in the classroom. This will allow the instructors to monitor police adherence and behavior and help ensure that crimes are properly documented and victims are treated respectfully.

8. Will you support legislation to repeal the so-called Prostitution-Free Zone (PFZ) law, which facilitates anti-transgender profiling?

Yes. The legislation adds no benefit to law enforcement or to public safety and carries no additional penalties if an individual is convicted for sex-work within the "zone".

HUMAN RIGHTS

- 9. 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. The Human Rights Act is one of the District's most important laws and the Director should have the background and qualifications to enforce these valuable protections. As a member of the Council, I could not support the appointment of an individual without that candidate having a proven track record in the civil-rights arena and would expect them to have the education and work history equal to the position.

- 10. Will you support legislation to allow the issuance of new birth certificates for individuals who undergo treatment related to gender transition, end the requirement for publishing notice of a name change in the newspaper, and allow issuance of new birth certificates via administrative process instead of a court order?**

Yes. I recently Co-Sponsored the "JAPARKER DEONI JONES BIRTH CERTIFICATE EQUALITY AMENDMENT ACT OF 2013". Individuals deserve the right to legally define their sexual identity without unnecessary hindrances of time, or costly court fees. I will vote to enact the bill into law.

YOUTH AND SENIORS

- 11. 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. These funds, when used to educate and promote bigotry and intolerance, not only violate the separation of church and state but the protections of our Human Rights Act.

- 12. Will you support legislation to ensure equal Medicaid spousal impoverishment protections for same-sex partners, including providing local funding to pay for benefits that are denied at the federal level due to the anti-gay Defense of Marriage Act?**

Yes. I truly believe same-sex couples should enjoy ALL the same protections as straight couples. This includes spousal retirement and Social Security benefits. All couples, especially our seniors, should not have to risk the depletion of their life savings due to a partners need for long term care. Allowing spouses to qualify for this equal protection will also help them retain home ownership, which is beneficial to the entire city.

CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES

- 13. 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, without excluding any ward?**

Yes. We must extend all efforts to support and welcome businesses that operate legally, adult-oriented included. NIMBY's and moratoriums can actually hurt neighborhoods by delaying important economic development opportunities.

- 14. Will you support legislation to eliminate legal standing for ad hoc protest groups and citizens associations in liquor licensing cases, to permit input by all**

community stakeholders via the great weight already accorded Advisory Neighborhood Commissions?

Yes. As a former four-term ANC Commissioner, I understand the process of liquor licensing approval and believe the commission's decision should hold more than "great weight" because they are acting on behalf of their constituents in their neighborhood where the license is to be considered. A strong advocate of protest and democracy, I believe those in opposition should argue their concerns to the ANC, not the courts.

15. What will you do to provide alternatives to incarceration for marginalized and at-risk populations like homeless youth and transgender people who resort to prostitution for survival?

Studies clearly show that high percentages of homeless teens are LGBTQ. We, as a society, must provide them a safe place to be, grow and thrive. One of the successes of the city's response to LGBTQ homelessness is the Wanda Alston House, which I have and will continue to support physically and monetarily. I will fully support duplicating this benefit to our society by expanding the program to a second or third property within two years.

Similarly, those who resort to sex work to survive need alternative options. I applaud Mayor Gray for launching the first in the nation jobs training program for our Transgender community and I will work to expand these efforts as a member of the Council.

Your record is part of your rating. Please list any actions that you have taken that may help illustrate your record on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

I've fought my adult life to end discrimination as a civil rights and women's right's activist and naturally, I aligned this commitment to advancing LGBTQ equality. It came natural to me to stand up for the rights of my friends, as they stood up for me, an African American. I returned to the District after attending UC Berkeley in the late 60's and within years was working with LGBT individuals in all arenas of economic and social justice, one of the first was fighting for Gays to remain teachers. I attended my first Gertrude Stein meeting in 1978 and remain active still. I supported adding sexual orientation as a protected class around the same time. I comforted loved ones as they lay dying of AIDS in the 80's, I supported and helped advance Gay and Lesbian rights, domestic partnerships and civil unions in the 90's, I supported and worked to create the DC Office of LGBT Affairs, adoption rights and marriage equality. I support Transgender rights today.

The friends, the employees I hired, the meetings, parades, marches, and the protests- I've been there throughout and will continue to be there.

Updated: 3-8-13- I plan on introducing 2 pieces of legislation that you may find of interest.

One is a ceremonial resolution honoring the 23rd Annual DC Black Pride celebration.

The other, though not specifically LBG T related, is of interest to all communities. In April, I plan to introduce a bill that will offer HIV/STD testing of individuals before they are released from the DC Jail. Currently, inmates are tested upon admittance but not before release. I think this is a benefit to the health of our city and would appreciate your support for passage.