

**GLAA Questionnaire Answers, February 2014, by
G. Lee Aikin, candidate, Statehood Green Party, At Large for City Council**

PUBLIC HEALTH

G. Lee Aikin

gfa One) Yes. DC government employees should be provided transgender-inclusive health insurance. However, sex affirmative surgery, I'm told, is extremely expensive. How would this affect health insurance rates for most DC employees? There are many other types of expensive surgeries that could also be covered to make people more consistent with their desired self-image. If DC resources are adequate for a more robust inclusion of such surgeries that are now considered elective, then I certainly would support this option.

gfa Two) Yes. The LGBT population has serious health issues and needs and I support helping them. A recent merger of Behavioral Health and Addiction Offices by the DC government seems a sensible move. This population has higher rates of mental and physical issues caused by the stress of living a frequently disapproved lifestyle, and partial or total rejection by family. It is also more subject to risks of HIV/AIDS/Hepatitis/TB infection from unsafe sex practices and shared needle use.

gfa Three) Yes. Restricting medical marijuana laws and regulations to only a few specific illnesses is absurd. It is outrageous that for 10 years Congress would not even let us count our Referendum on marijuana. I know people for whom light marijuana smoking is as effective and could be a lot cheaper than anti-anxiety drugs. Since marijuana causes fewer behavioral problems than legal alcohol, current laws on marijuana don't make any sense at all. Didn't we learn anything from the Volstead Act? Apparently not, since in DC we arrest 2 1/2 times as many youth for simple possession as graduate from high school, permanently scarring their life and job prospects with an arrest record.

gfa Four) I would meet with the appropriate community support groups like Whitman-Walker, Joseph's House, etc. to determine their needs and satisfaction with HAHSTA services. I would meet with HAHSTA to determine how their services could be improved, and to what extent legislative and budget changes could help. I would want to meet with school administrators to determine if appropriate and effective sex and STD education is being taught. Informed by my two boys in DC schools, I suspect that important facts about sex are not being taught at an early enough age.

JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

G. Lee Aikin

gfa Five) Yes. There have been some extremely ugly hate crimes against transgender people in recent years, but a lack of urgency in response. There is also a definite pattern of numerous street crimes against GLBT people going home from clubs and restaurants. More oversight of MPD collection and use of statistics can be used to help promote greater and faster police action.

gfa Six) The city must provide adequate funding for LGBT friendly youth housing facilities. Between youth who come from or run away from abusive homes or foster homes, or age out of the system, there is a serious problem of youth who lack legal survival and employment skills and have no one who cares about them. While more funding is needed for transitional and supportive group housing, a less costly adjunct could be to set up a system of mentorships including private housing. One legislative idea I have is to promote a "Good Samaritan", hold harmless law, that would give legal protection to anyone providing use of land, building, job, or personal attention from baseless lawsuits or damages. Sex in

itself should be considered a victimless crime, unless an adult is exploiting an under age person. Then the law should deal with the exploiter, not the young person who should be provided with social services. Not everyone can or wants to go to college. The city must develop a robust program of vocational and adult education for the jobs of today.

gfa Seven) Yes. MPD personnel definitely need to know more about LGBT culture and intimate partner violence. This is both a gay and straight problem and often is very dangerous for MPD personnel as well. When there are instances of anti-transgender bias by MPD officers, then more training is needed. In a diverse city such as ours, there should be zero tolerance of persistent anti-gay, anti-transgender, and racist behavior by police. Some very alarming cases have involved black trans-gender people.

HUMAN RIGHTS

E. Lee Rubin

gfa Eight) Yes. I don't know how a top executive in an Office of Human Rights could work effectively without experience and training in civil rights law enforcement. In addition to GLBT rights, we in the DCSGP are very concerned with discrimination against returning citizens (former prisoners). Much more attention must be given to these issues, and backlog of civil rights cases must be corrected with better funding or more personnel. Also, a \$1/4 million DC budget for returned citizens is absurd.

gfa Nine) Yes. If the poor results from the trans-inclusive Project Empowerment training cannot be identified and corrected, then it would make sense to establish a project in the Dept. of Employment Services to increase hiring from under-represented populations including the transgendered. This should probably include training in job hunting and interviewing skills.

YOUTH AND SENIORS

E. Lee Rubin

gfa Ten) Yes. LGBT homeless youth and seniors are among our most vulnerable populations. See question Six for thoughts on youth homelessness. Supportive/group home situations for the elderly are very much needed, and continuing support for neighborhood Senior Villages is important. I cared for my Mother and Husband as they were dying. They did not want to die alone in a hospital, so I cared for them at my home where they died. Whether people are dying from HIV/AIDS or old age, we need to provide people with training on how to care for people in their final months. Much money is wasted on doctors and hospitals that would be better spent on home care and training the care givers. Almost no one wants to die in a hospital if their family/loved ones knew how to give home care.

CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES

E. Lee Rubin

gfa Eleven) Yes. It has always amazed me that people who choose to live in a lively neighborhood commercial area then protest because it IS a lively neighborhood commercial area. Everyone can take part in the ANC processes which carry "great weight" with the DC government.

gfa Twelve) Yes. Adults should have the right to enjoy any entertainment that does no harm to others. DC government actions destroying the gay entertainment area on behalf of Nationals Stadium shows why we need a strict Eminent Domain Law in DC, restoring the original Constitutional intent that ED should be used for schools, hospitals, etc., and not to support private economic gain against the rights of existing property holders. Adult-oriented entertainment must not be punished with unnecessary regulations. No exclusion from any Wards of businesses obeying appropriate zoning and licensing.

Related Personal Actions and Experience

G Lee Aikin

In the past two years I have made a point of forwarding articles about GLBT issues and human interest to appropriate members of the GLBT political and journalistic community. A number of years ago I made a presentation at Whitman-Walker on new highly effective methods of dealing with emotional/PTSD/abuse issues (which I used for 10 years seeing clients about such issues). When my husband died from Alzheimer's, I gave all his adult diapers to Joseph's House. I would be happy to speak with a GLBT group about home care of the dying, and planning an an-home death. [See my answer to Question Ten.] *G L A*

I gained much personal experience in the early 1980's regarding the problems of living as a GLBT person. My husband was seldom around and my sons were mostly off with their friends, so I started going to the bars on P St. near my DuPont Circle home. I especially liked the piano bars at Friends and the Fireplace. As a fun but maternal figure a number of young gay people became my friends and long term acquaintances. They would tell me their troubles and ask for advise. I will outline some of their stories. They are mostly all dead, so I don't think I will be breaking confidences.

A) A man in his 30's He had suffered severe sexual abuse by his brother and was neglected by his alcoholic mother. He developed AIDS and gradually went blind. He called me one day in panic, "I can't see anything, it's all black." He lived with an abusive lover who didn't believe he was blind and left obstacles for him to trip over, and even refused to let him get a guide dog. I begged him to let me find a better placement for him, but he refused. They both died a year or two later.

B) A 17 year old, emancipated minor who fled the abusive foster home system. He lived with an older gay man who died of AIDS. We did some renovation work together, I taught him some skills, and he developed his artistic talent and started a business. He succeeded in creating a good life for himself, including providing my son a job and mentorship, but died at 50 from Hepatitis C.

C) An artistically and dramatically talented young man who was reasonably successful as a drag performer. I gave him a free place to live in my home for several months. He had been severely abused physically and emotionally by his alcoholic single mother. Subsequently he was raped by an HIV positive "friend". He probably became HIV positive (he had practiced protected sex in the ordinary course), and ODED either accidentally or on purpose a year or two later.

D) A man in his 30s who was into leather daddies who beat and bruised his butt so badly I told him he was in danger of dying from a lung embolism. He started coming to a self-help therapeutic group I had organized. In a major breakthrough he realized the origin of his behavior in his relationship with his distant father who passed off discipline of this son onto his overwhelmed wife. After this he no longer engaged in abusive sex, and had several relationships before he died of AIDS a few years later.

I could provide at least a half dozen other stories, but since you probably don't need a novel, will stop here. The point is, I have heard the tragic early histories and watched the successes and failures of a number of GLBT people over time and helped where I could. I will continue to do so whether elected or not.

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