

Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, DC 2014 Questionnaire for D.C. Council Candidates

1. Yes. I support Mayor Vincent C. Gray's executive action and other efforts to remove discriminatory exclusions in health insurance by requiring insurers to remove from their policies language that discriminates on the basis of gender identity and expression, and to include coverage for sex affirmation surgery as a medically necessary benefit. This effort protects the transgender community's health insurance rights, but I will continue to work to ensure that we continue examine and end trans exclusions in health care.

2. Yes. Because the LGBT population experiences high levels of health disparities due to bias, discrimination, harassment and a disproportionate percentage of the LGBT population who lack health insurance. LGBT youth are particularly vulnerable. The only solution is to devote specific resources to address the unique health needs of the LGBT population, which I will support as a member of the Council.

3. Yes. I believe the original list of qualifying conditions for medical marijuana were too restrictive. I fully support relying on a physician's diagnosis instead of qualifying conditions.

4. I will work to implement the recommendations made by DC Appleseed in it's Eighth Report Card following it's 2005 report on the District's response to public health crises. Specifically, I will work to improve grant management through oversight to ensure that funds for HIV/AIDS services are used efficiently and responsibly; ensure adequate HIV surveillance, monitoring and evaluations by appropriating resources sufficient to staff the office responsible for tracking HIV and AIDS, and improving sexual health education across all schools.

5. Yes. I will make crime reporting and data collection of hate crimes against LGBT people a priority. In order to properly develop strategies to reduce incidents of hate crimes, we must have accurate statistics on all LGBT-related hate crimes. The Council must also play a strong role in this effort by exercising oversight to ensure that we take seriously incidents of anti-LGBT assault and by working to restore a robust Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit within the Metropolitan Police Department.

6. Our goal must be to prevent sex work by addressing the issues that cause people to turn to it. Incarceration of those who turn to sex work to survive does not resolve the problem. The District must provide resources, such as drop-in centers like CASA Ruby, supportive and transitional housing for LGBT adults and youth like the Wanda Alston House, job training and other educational opportunities, counseling, and mental health and other health services.

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7. Yes. All of our public safety officers and other first responders must be properly trained to properly respond to the needs of the LGBT community. Cultural and sensitivity training for police officers is necessary in order to properly maintain public safety and to build and retain the trust of all residents. And with intimate partner abuse in an estimated 25% - 33% of LGBT relationships, it is important that we educate first responders and other service providers on existence and dynamics of LGBT partner abuse, and advocate for services for survivors of this abuse.

8. Yes. The Office of Human Rights (OHR) is a key resource for remedying discrimination in our city against protected classes of people. Therefore, it is particularly important that the Director of OHR have a particularly firm understanding of civil rights law.

9. Yes. With transgender people unemployed at a rate of ten times the national average, we have to take affirmative steps to ensure that we are both employing transgender people and setting the appropriate example for other employers.

10. Yes. With many LGBT youth kicked out of their homes and LGBT seniors facing discrimination in senior facilities and from service providers, we have to provide sufficient housing for LGBT youth and seniors. With ongoing complaints of anti-LGBT discrimination and victimization in homeless shelters, we are obligated to address this issue with improved services and transitional housing sufficient to meet the great need. I am a strong supporter of the Wanda Alston House and Mary's House for Older Adults. However, many more resources are needed.

11. Yes. I will support legislation that requires residents to utilize the alcohol license protest process provided by the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) so as to not allow abuse of our regulatory system. It is important that we allow residents to have a voice in processes and decisions that affect their communities, but I believe that can be done through the ANC process.

12. Yes. Consenting adults should be free to choose their entertainment so long as it does not infringe on the rights of others, and businesses must be allowed to provide it.

As Legislative Counsel to Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, which position I resigned to run for the At-Large seat, I spent many years working to defend the rights and privileges of the LGBT community. Specifically, I worked directly with Congresswoman Norton and with advocates to defend and protect the District's Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Amendment Act of 2009 (marriage equality bill) from being overturned by Congress. I also worked to remove the needle exchange ban

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rider from being attached to the District's budget to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in the District. Since launching my campaign, I have gained significant support from members of the LGBT community, including top-level campaign staff. I also demonstrated with Wilson High School students in counter-protest to the Westboro Baptist Church's demonstration against Wilson's Gay Pride Day and publicly encouraged my campaign supporters to stand with me.

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