

Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, DC 2015 Questionnaire for D.C. Council Candidates

HOME RULE

1. If Congress acts to block recent bills enacted by the District to repeal the Armstrong Amendment and to prohibit conversion therapy for minors, will you speak out during your campaign in defense of these bills, and if elected will you stand with your colleagues against congressional meddling?

Nothing precludes elected officials from the District of Columbia to enact or repeal legislation that violates the human rights of its citizen. The Home Rule Charter does not restrict the Council from repealing discriminatory practices. The Armstrong Amendment and conversion therapy for minors are inherently discriminatory in nature. As a DC Human Rights Commissioner, I will continue to render fair judgment(s) on the nineteen protected traits set forth in the DC Human Rights Act of 1977. If elected, I will continue to challenge Congress on its meddling in our local politics.

FAMILIES

2. Will you support Bill 21-16, the Collaborative Reproduction Amendment Act of 2015, to legalize and regulate surrogacy agreements?

Yes, I support Bill 21-16 because the definition of family has changed and it is the responsibility of our elected officials to amend laws to reflect these changes.

HEALTH

3. If you are assigned to the Committee on Health and Human Services, what will you do 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 professor at Howard University's College of Medicine (Department of Pediatrics and Child Health; and the Department of Community and Family Medicine), I work directly with HAHSTA on a number of DC Department of Health (DOH) funded initiatives. As a Co-Investigator for a grant surveying healthcare provider stigma towards persons with communicable diseases, we are discovering through research that negative provider attitudes towards infected patients may be a determinant as to whether they will seek and sustain treatment. On another DOH funded initiative, I co-host an annual HIV Stigma Conference at Howard University (@Stigma), where we are attempting to bring down barriers that impact prevention, surveillance and mental health services for high-risk populations.

While HAHSTA has made great strides towards improving health outcomes, it could improve its effectiveness by developing performance indicators that are directly tied to specific aims and funding goals. Strong performance indicators will assist HAHSTA in prioritizing funding opportunities and target certain health issues or concerns. Subsequently, organizations who receive funding will align

their performance measures with DOH's performance indicators to further ensure the effectiveness of policies.

Finally, there needs to be more funding opportunities under HAHSTA. These funding opportunities can be driven by the agency's performance indicators and ultimately make a difference in the lives of persons infected with communicable diseases. More research is essential to improving prevention, surveillance and mental health services for populations designated as high-risk.

4. Will you support legislation establishing a regulatory framework to set LGBT cultural competency standards for healthcare providers?

Yes, as a Co-Investigator for a healthcare provider survey/study, we are attempting to identify barriers between healthcare providers and high-risk patients. The findings from this study will help to advise DOH and other stakeholders on how to reduce stigma in healthcare settings.

5. Will you support budgets that target funds to address health disparities in the LGBT population, including in mental health and substance abuse treatment?

Yes, there are health disparities in the LGBT population that need to be addressed. However, the lack of jobs/income equality, fair housing and educational opportunities are likely social determinants of these health disparities. I support line items within the budget that deals directly with the lack of essential services in the LGBT community.

JUDICIARY

6. If you are assigned to the Committee on the Judiciary, 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, I support more oversight on how statistics are gathered and analyzed for all crimes. In order for the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to effectively fight crime(s), statistics must be gathered objectively. This data could be used to deploy officers to certain areas where crimes against transgendered individuals are showing spikes. This data is also important to the Council when appropriating funds to certain programs.

7. Will you support Bill 21-38, the Death with Dignity Act of 2015?

As a healthcare provider, father, husband and citizen, I support the concept of comfort and care. However, as a representative of the citizens of Ward 4, I would show deference to their position on this issue.

HUMAN RIGHTS

8. Will you push to establish a project to increase government hiring from under-represented populations, including transgender people?

Yes, I support such a project being funded under the DC Department of Employment Services (DOES). While the DC Human Rights Act of 1977 provide protections to transgender people, this population has historically been exposed to high levels of discrimination. Given this inequality, the creation of DOES job placement services for qualified transgender individuals is warranted.

YOUTH AND SENIORS

9. Will you support improved services and treatment for LGBT homeless youth and seniors, including transitional housing?

Yes, I have consistently stated throughout my candidacy that I support transitional housing for the homeless with mandatory vocational training for all able body/mind individuals.

CONSUMERS AND BUSINESSES

10. Will you defend 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?

Yes, so long as the entity is appropriately licensed and zoned, nothing should preclude the business from providing the adult-oriented entertainment or an adult from enjoying it.

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. Your answers should be typed in a separate document rather than on this form. *You must sign your name on each answer sheet to indicate your personal commitment to your answers.*

Please return your signed questionnaire responses by Thursday, March 5 to GLAA, P.O. Box 75265, Washington, D.C. 20013; or email it as an attachment in PDF format (for loading on GLAA's website) to equal@glaa.org. Thank you.

Edwin W. Powell, Candidate

Ward 4 Council Seat

Edwin W. Powell, Ward 4 Candidate

February 1, 2015

GLAA
P.O. Box 75265
Washington, D.C. 20013

Dear GLAA:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter to outline actions that I have taken on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. I can imagine that the other candidates are having a difficult time completing this questionnaire because I can argue that none of them have invested more in the LGBT community than me. Since 2008, I have supported the efforts of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and have spent a lot of time in the area of academia fighting for the rights of this community. As a District of Columbia Human Rights Commissioner, I have spent the last three years championing the rights of persons from the LGBT community. While we have made some strides toward equality for the LGBT community, there is still substantial work that has to be done!

In 2008, I was walking down the U. Street Corridor when I was approached by a young man with a clipboard in his hand. He introduced himself to me and told me that he was representing the HRC. I did not know much about the organization but made a monetary contribution and immediately started receiving emails about the work of the organization. To date, I have donated thousands of dollars towards HRC's efforts and have signed online petitions and written a number of letters to members of Congress on key issues ranging from marriage inequality to workplace discrimination. I am still a paying member of the organization and will continue to support its efforts and fight for equality.

As a professor at Howard University College of Medicine (Department of Pediatrics and Child Health; and the Department of Community and Family Medicine), I have been involved in a number of research projects that focuses on HIV/AIDS infection rates and populations impacted by the disease the most. As a result of our work at Howard University, we have been intricately involved in bringing down the infection rates of individuals by participating in the prevention campaigns sponsored by the DC Department of Health (DOH). Subsequently, we were able to use secondary data from research studies to discern how the LGBT community was being impacted by certain variables. Today, as a Co-investigator on a research study, we are now looking at how stigma plays a role in treating persons with HIV/AIDS from the community, including LGBT people. Finally, an annual Stigma Conference is held annually at Howard University and I am one of the Co-Hosts/Organizers. This international conference brings people from all walks of life to the podium to speak about the impact of stigma on their lives and how the conference workshops and resources have given them hope.

Edwin W. Powell, Ward 4 Candidate

It is my hope that as time goes by, the broader society will be able to look at LGBT people as just 'people'. I am hopeful that one day we can drop the LGBT acronym and allow this group of individuals to blend into the American fabric without a distinction. As a DC Councilmember representing Ward 4, I will continue to fight and defend the nineteen protected traits listed in the DC Human Rights Act of 1977. Again, it was a pleasure to participate in this questionnaire and I hope that my sincerity exuded with every written word. I look forward to your final critique and publication. With every good wish, I am,

Sincerely,

Edwin W. Powell, Candidate
Ward 4 Council Seat