

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

### Brandon Todd, Democrat, Ward 4 Council Candidate

#### 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?

Yes, I will definitely speak out as I have when legislation passed by the District comes under fire from Congress. I will stand up for home rule and will work closely with the Mayor and our delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton to fight for budget autonomy and legislative autonomy as the same time we fight for Statehood. I support our Mayor's stand on Initiative 71 and will stand up for such legislation as the repeal of the Armstrong Amendment in the Human Rights Amendment Act, Bill20-803, and the recently passed bill banning conversion therapy for minors in the District of Columbia. I supported both those pieces of legislation and was pleased that the District became on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Jurisdiction after California and New Jersey to pass the ban on conversion therapy for minors.

#### FAMILIES

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

Yes I support and will vote for the Collaborative Reproduction Amendment Act of 2015, Bill 21-16, to legalize and regulate surrogacy-parenting agreements. I was pleased to see that it was reintroduced unanimously after the previous version didn't pass in an earlier session of the Council. I will vote for the bill, speak out for it and then when it is passed and signed by the Mayor will support it against any interference from congress. I agree with GLAA that it is a measure long overdue.

#### 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?

I will support reforms at the DC HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD and TB Administration. I have followed closely the reports from the Appleseed Center beginning in 2005 which delineated problems at what is now HAHSTA. I know that several of its recommendations were implemented, including reform of the handling of epidemiologic data; a citywide HIV testing campaign; and a citywide condom distribution program. But it is clear from reading the eighth report card that DC

Appleseed put out that improvements are needed in grants management; HIV surveillance; monitoring and evaluations; and sexual health education across charter schools.<sup>1</sup>

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I support the work of HAHSTA to ensure that HIV testing is standard in all D.C. run health facilities, and encouraged in private facilities. I want to see that HAHSTA educates all testing and healthcare facilities to ensure trained providers and to help patients recognize symptoms of acute HIV infection and make referrals for specialized testing. It is crucial that HAHSTA maintain anonymous testing sites and educate residents on the difference between confidential and anonymous testing.

I support having Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) for HIV provided as appropriate to at-risk clients at all D.C. emergency rooms, urgent care centers and health clinics. Its availability should be publicized and included in student health classes.

I believe that Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) should be provided for sero-discordant couples.

Oversight of HAHSTA's programs, especially for HIV/AIDS should include seeing that they have programs targeting overlooked populations such as seniors, the deaf and hard of hearing, immigrants and transgender people.

I support the Continuation of the Needle Exchange Program, authorized by D.C. Municipal Code 48-1103.01<sup>2</sup> which helps prevent blood-borne disease without increasing drug use and continued distribution of condoms and water-based lubricant, the safest and most effective prevention method for reducing HIV transmission.

I will work with the administration to ensure continued Ryan White Funding and push the DOH to obtain a waiver of the Ryan White 75% - 25% rule to make more funds available for patient support services.

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

Yes- after discussions with members of the LGBT community I have come to understand that this is crucial to having a quality healthcare system that works for everyone in the District. I understand that Lesbians are at particular risk of not receiving early diagnoses of breast and cervical cancers, based on lack of access to and sensitivity of medical providers to lesbian sexuality issues. Transgender people face similar barriers in seeking comprehensive healthcare. We will be working with our allies this year to craft legislation establishing a regulatory framework to set LGBT cultural competency standards for healthcare providers.

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 I support having the District's health budgets include targeted funds to address health disparities in the LGBT population, including in mental health and substance abuse treatment.<sup>3</sup>

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## **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- This has been an issue for many years.

I am aware that the Metropolitan Police Department's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit (GLLU), established in 2000, was the first such unit in the country to combine community relations with full policing powers. I am totally committed to continuing the GLLU at full force with a central unit and as well as a presence in each Ward. But that presence doesn't obviate for a strong central unit. That central unit is at full force with seven officers and a fulltime sergeant.

Data gathering and accurate reporting is crucial and I support the District developing a comprehensive multi-agency/service provider strategy to reduce hate crimes. Our MPD must ensure that its gathering and analysis of crime statistics is comprehensive and objective and includes data on LGBT-related hate crimes and intimate partner violence.

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

Three states including Oregon, Washington, and Vermont all have laws that allow a mutually competent individual the ability to hasten their death. I would want to understand how the laws have been implemented in these states to ensure we are looking at all regulatory steps needed to ensure the law isn't abused.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS**

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

Yes – I know that the D.C. Human Rights Act of 1977 (DCHRA) is one of the strongest human rights laws in the country. Even knowing this is important that we review it on a regular basis to ensure it is up-to-date and that it is enforced District-wide. I will work with the Mayor to ensure that the Mayor's Order to all District agencies on compliance with all protected categories under DCHRA is updated and re-issued. We must ensure that every agency has complete lists of protected classes in non-discrimination statements.

I am aware that Transgender people in the District are unemployed at a rate ten times the national average and that many live far below the poverty level. It is a sad state of our Democracy that more transgender women were murdered in the last decade than were employed by the D.C. government.

I supported Mayor Gray's initiative to include transgender people in Project Empowerment job training at the Department of Employment Services (DOES) to help them escape the streets and I know that Mayor Bowser is committed to doing even more and I fully support that. I support having Transgender residents hired in the Executive Office of the Mayor and by the Council to demonstrate a commitment to moving forward on this issue.

*P. T. Fu*

## **YOUTH AND SENIORS**

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

Yes- I supported and spoke out for the passage of the LGBTQ Homeless Youth Reform Amendment Act of 2013. I continue to support and will speak out on the council for LGBT-inclusive Age-Friendly DC Initiatives. The kind that we have seen with the City partnering with Casa Ruby to build a new facility. I support Mayor Bowser's plan to increase funding for affordable housing through the Housing Production Trust Fund. . I support housing programs for low-income LGBT people particularly those with HIV/AIDS who should not have to suffer homelessness. I support funding for Permanent Supportive Housing, and Local Rent Supplement Program at adequate levels to meet the needs of this population. Youth Risk Behavior Survey

We need to focus on our LGBT because we have statistics from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education showing that self-identified gay, lesbian, and bisexual students in D.C. public middle and high schools were three times likelier to attempt suicide. There were also dramatically higher rates of cocaine and methamphetamine use among LGB youth. But since the response rate to the survey done was low we need to see an even greater commitment to getting accurate data and serving youth in need.

I supported the Youth Bullying Prevention Act, and that D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) has pursued its own anti-bullying initiatives. But on the council I will provide oversight to ensure follow-through and enforcement which is essential to give at-risk youth more than a toothless policy.

I support the DCPS Health Standards that include sexual orientation and gender identity as part of "the knowledge and skills that students need to maintain and improve their health and wellness, prevent disease, and reduce health-jeopardizing behaviors."

The District is seeing an increasing number of LGBT seniors who are 'out' and will need services. I support the implementation of culturally competent policies and training in senior services which will foster an environment that provides confidence and security for the District's LGBT seniors. The D.C. Office on Aging should use the Washington, D.C. LGBT Aging Coalition of Elders as a resource.

I support funding that specifically targets LGBT senior services which could provide a sustained basis for fostering partnerships and coordinating efforts for more efficiency with District of Columbia aging service providers

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**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- the District of Columbia is a world class city and the hospitality industry generates a good deal of the District's revenue. Adult entertainment must be a part of the mix. I am committed to working with the residents in my District and the ANC's as we look at any new business that wants to open. I am committed to looking at each establishment on an individual basis.

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**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](mailto:equal@glaa.org). Thank you.**

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