

Responses of Councilmember Jack Evans

1. Tell us something about yourself, including why you are running for office.

I have served as the Ward 2 Councilmember since being elected in 1991 in a special election. I genuinely enjoy the job, which involves bringing together a diverse array of stakeholders to find practical solutions to the problems and challenges facing Ward 2 and our city.

2. If elected, what are the three most important things you intend to accomplish?

First and foremost is continuing to reform our public schools to bring a higher level of achievement and accountability. The ability to better educate our children is not only a moral imperative, but is critical to ending the social problems associated with the lack of education, inability to gain employment, etc. Ultimately we will need a trained workforce to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. Secondly, I believe continued economic development of the ward and the city is important. Washington DC still has so much rebuilding and renewal in the wake of the 1968 riots, and I am pleased we have made progress, but we still have much to do, particularly in Shaw, but I also hope to help mentor my other ward colleagues in devising strategies to help revive neighborhood commercial areas throughout the city, especially using transit-oriented development to create livable/walkable neighborhoods throughout the city. Thirdly, the issue of public safety is a very important one for my constituents and our continued attention is warranted. I will work to continue to enhance community policing, particularly to put more police on the streets, increase the use of technology such as ShotSpotter, but also work on the root causes of crime, which are a lack of opportunity, training, education, and many other factors. I have worked very hard in the Shaw community to facilitate gang treaties and pair youth with such services.

3. Briefly summarize your priorities regarding taxation (business, individual, and property) and expenditures, highlighting any changes to current tax law or spending practices that you will promote if elected.

I believe, of course, it is important for us to continue our track record of solid financial management. At this point, the District has balanced 13 budgets and we have gone from bankruptcy and junk bond status to record surpluses and an A+ bond rating on Wall Street. Among the projects I anticipate working on in the next year, as Chair of the Committee on Finance and Revenue, are continuing efforts to increase the standard deduction and personal exemption, further expand the District's Earned Income Tax Credit – which I originally authored, and update the District's Schedule H, which is the property tax credit for renters. While I believe the District's revenue picture will remain somewhat flat for the next year or two, due to the national economy, I believe we can make progress on these initiatives.

4. Either directly or indirectly, public education affects every Washingtonian. If elected, what will you do to improve the quality of our public schools' system?

I wholeheartedly agree with the significance of this question. In fact, improving the schools directly relates to many things – not only improving the lives and outcomes of District children, but in helping make our city a productive, safe, and attractive city. Back when the Council considered the School Modernization Act, I was the Councilmember who devised the financing mechanism, which will result in \$200 million/year going to school re/construction. But as we all know, schools are much more than bricks and mortar, as important as those things are. I have been supportive of Mayor Fenty and Chancellor Rhee's reform initiatives. I believe they should be given some (although not complete) leeway to rethink programs, policies, and personnel to bring more accountability and better results to the school system. In general, I believe we are funding the school

system at a sustainable level, and I agree with the Mayor that our focus now needs to be on producing better results for those dollars spent.

5. What legislation or policies do you advocate for reducing gun violence in the District of Columbia?

That's, of course, a complex question. In a previous question I referenced more police and better use of technology, but I also believe we need to do more to create wrap-around services, centered around our schools as neighborhood community centers perhaps, and target resources -- particularly to at-risk youth. I also think expanding certain school programs -- particularly after school tutoring, arts, athletics, etc., can help address those troublesome hours between the end of school and the evening when so much can happen. I believe every District child should have the full and enriching school experience I had as a child.

6. What steps will you take to help alleviate the lack of affordable health care in the District?

The District has made great strides over the past few years in expanding access to health care. I strongly supported passage of the Healthy DC Act, under which we have expanded health care coverage tremendously. According to the Kaiser Family Health Foundation, the District now ranks #1 in the country with providing health insurance assistance to the uninsured.

7. Briefly summarize your positions regarding reproductive health choice, including emergency contraception.

I strongly support a woman's right to choose, and support the provision of emergency contraception as part of the services offered under District insurance plans and facilities.

8. Do you support legal recognition of marriage between same sex partners?

Yes, absolutely. I was the first elected official in the District to come out in favor of equal marriage rights for same sex partners back in the 1990's.

9. Will you support the legislative and/or regulatory changes necessary to ensure that the District recognizes marriages legally sanctioned in other jurisdictions?

Yes. The District should extend full faith and credit to such marriages/partnerships, and I would be happy to introduce such legislation. DC enjoys visitors, as well as people stationed here for work, from across the nation and the world. It would be horrible for a married couple to visit here and have some sort of problem and fall into legal limbo, unable to make health care decisions or exercise various rights inherent in marriage. I believe we should do whatever is necessary to clarify our recognition of such legal marriages and partnerships from other jurisdictions.

10. What will you do to help create, protect, and maintain affordable housing options and alleviate homelessness?

Very good question. I have been the Council's leader on reestablishing and funding the Housing Production Trust Fund, which is used in several ways, but particularly to retain existing affordable housing by providing loans or other assistance to tenant organizations so they can purchase their buildings. It has the wonderful secondary effect of enabling these tenants to become homeowners, build equity, get the tax deduction, and help them enter the middle class. I have also been working closely with Mayor Fenty on the Housing First initiative. I believe we need to move beyond the shelter model for homeless individuals and move towards a permanent/supportive housing model. I think facilities which offer supportive services which are convenient to affordable housing sites, such as N Street Village, or the Common Ground model in NY, help point the way. We made a good start in this year's budget on the Housing First initiative, but there is more we can and will do in this area.

11. What will you do to support the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and to help ensure its responsiveness to its riders?

The rise in the price of gasoline has had the effect of making our transit systems even more important than before. I think this will ultimately prove fortunate for the District and our ability to create more transit-oriented development, which we are uniquely suited to provide. I think to continue the upkeep of the system, prevent fare increases, especially for patrons in the city who are absolutely reliant on public transportation, I have supported the idea of creating a dedicated funding stream from the District, MD, and VA to support Metro. In fact the Council is on record as supporting this.

12. In your campaign what are you doing to train, support, and encourage more people to get involved throughout the democratic process of the District of Columbia?

Great question. My campaign has set up a canvassing operation and will be doing phone banking and we have primarily hired college students to help us with these efforts. We will also be making a big push for volunteers for the week before and election day itself, so if you have any suggestions we should explore please share them! We, of course, have a base of volunteers in Ward 2 who are long time supporters of mine, but I am very enthusiastic about involving people as much as we can.

13. Which committees would you seek to serve on if elected and why? If you are an incumbent, name two accomplishments achieved while serving on your committee(s), excluding the Committee of the Whole? If you are an incumbent, do you plan to continue serving on your current committee(s), excluding the Committee of the Whole?

If reelected, I anticipate I would continue to serve as Chair of the Committee on Finance and Revenue, and likely continue to serve as a Member of the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Economic Development. On the Committee on Finance I have a number of initiatives I am pursuing, which I outlined above. On the Committee on Judiciary, which I chaired previously in the past, my top accomplishments were in the realm of reforming the District's sodomy law, moving the District towards a community policing model, updating outdated criminal code provisions, and reestablishing the Office of Police Complaints. On the Committee on Economic Development, we have been active in creating a new oversight function, to be housed at the DC Auditor, to track various commitments made during the approval of development projects to ensure that the conditions and stipulations made as part of those deals (such as affordable housing, job training, other requirements, etc.) are actually kept.