

1) Why are you running for City Council, and if (re)elected, what are the three most important things you intend to accomplish in the near term?

I am running for reelection because, despite the improvements made in Ward One since I first took office in 1999, there is work left to be done. I am in a unique position to complete the unfinished work, due to the relationships I've developed over these past years with small business owners and developers.

When it comes to the three most important things I'd like to accomplish in the near term, we need to continue the solid progress we have made in Ward 1 first. A transformation that has most definitely involved conscientious development of previously empty lots ringed by chain link fences. A diverse Ward really matters to me---Thus, a transformation that has not only preserved, but also rehabilitated all of the large low income buildings east and west of 14th Street. We have brought jobs and prosperity to Columbia Heights and U Street, and George Avenue is showing true signs of economic development for the first time in decades. We have built upon, and strengthened transit-oriented development at our three major Metro stations, utilizing also new and improved bus routes.

Second, we need to continue the fight against violence and gangs in Ward 1. I have addressed these issues, both at their root causes—with jobs, education, and housing—and also with better and more police officers. My authorship of the gang prevention efforts in Ward 1 and city wide are really making a difference. This was a work that we began with Chief Ramsey back in 2004 and it has paid off.

Finally, we will continue what has been a very effective and conscientious effort by me and my staff to respond to the day-to-day quality of life issues that mean so much to my constituents. We're acknowledged to have one of the best constituent services in DC. Let me add that the fight for Statehood must continue unabated and not discouraged by recent events. We must continue to put the issue before Congress, forcing them to take ever more difficult and controversial actions to block Democracy for our City and its residents.

2) What are the three most important issues facing the District of Columbia in the next decade?

The three most important issues facing the District in the next decade are: economic revitalization; education; and crime. Economic revitalization is essential to the growth and continued health of the District. The recent recession has highlighted just how fragile the financial health of many District residents and businesses is. Breathing new life into decrepit and neglected businesses and attracting new development to the city are ways in which we can ensure there are enough job opportunities for District residents.

Of course, no one would want to move into a revitalized District, if the schools remained subpar. DC spends more per child than almost any jurisdiction in the country, yet performance on standardized tests is lagging. In the last couple of years, this has begun to turn around, thanks in part to the efforts of Chancellor Michelle Rhee. The schools are not where they should be, but I am encouraged by this latest development. However, it is important that the city officials not become complacent. We have a long way to go before we can declare victory.

Crime is also one of the three most pressing issues facing the District in the next decade. There has been a spike in gang violence and senseless homicides in the District in the past few years. While today's crime rates pall in comparison to the killings that earned DC the Murder Capital of the World appellation in the 1980s and early 1990s, this newest trend toward violent crime is troubling. In addition, robberies are up, due in no small part to the challenging economic situation in which we find ourselves. These trends must be stopped if DC is to thrive.

3) What are your qualifications to serve as Council member?

I have been Council member of Ward One for almost twelve years. That experience gives me an understanding of the legislative process and the inner workings of the Council. Prior to being elected in 1998, I served as Executive Director of Whitman Walker Clinic, which gave me invaluable experience at managing an office, balancing budgets and at tackling issues that unexpectedly arise. That experience has served me well as Ward One Council member. I am also a lawyer who clerked for former Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren and served as a staff attorney for the U.S. Senate Governmental Affairs Committee. My experience also includes stints working in private, agency and public interest law, all of which underscore my understanding of the multifaceted issues residents in the District face.

4) In the context of the projected budget shortfall, do you believe the current budget discussions fairly balance increases in revenue against spending reductions, and fairly allocate the burden of revenue increases? If not, what would you propose?

Given the budget shortfall, I believe the Council's budget discussions fairly balance revenue increases with spending reductions. In the midst of a recession, the Council has had to make very tough decisions, which resulted in reducing funding to numerous worthwhile community-services organizations and city projects. Despite these shortfalls, I have been able to allocate funds for tax relief to small businesses hurt by the street refurbishing projects in the District. The Council has had to increase taxes on sodas and other beverages to help raise revenues for the school system. While this may be an inconvenience for many residents, it amounts to a flat tax on city residents, which was a fair way to implement the needed revenue increases. The Council has

tried to limit individual tax increases in order to give residents some relief in these trying times. With the onus of finding resources to fund required city services, the Council has been judicious in balancing revenue increases with spending reductions.

5) The District of Columbia is suffering significantly higher unemployment than Maryland and Virginia in this recession. Describe your plan for broad-based job recovery.

My plan to combat unemployment is to attract new businesses into the city, which can hire chronically unemployed and underemployed residents. I have been successful in this endeavor, having brought Harris Teeter into the city and facilitated the construction of Giant, Target, Best Buy and other large grocery stores and retailers in the Columbia Heights area. There is still much work to be done in this regard. Outside of retail jobs, I identified and found funding for 80 full-time positions within the Department of Public Works. As the District continues to trim waste from government operations and close tax loopholes for corporations, I will work to reallocate some of those funds to creating needed city services jobs.

6) If (re)elected, what will you do to create and protect affordable housing options for both home-buyers and tenants, and alleviate homelessness?

If reelected, I will continue to protect affordable housing for home-buyers by pushing the city to sell more of its vacant properties at reasonable prices to home-buyers and into affordable housing. I will also work with the developers building condos and apartments in the city to ensure that there are affordable units within those new buildings. I will ensure the city's housing assistance continues to go to low and middle income residents. I will continue to vigorously levy fines and possible jail time for slumlords, who are more interested in turning a profit than maintaining livable conditions for their tenants. I am very proud of the 3000 low income units that we have not only preserved, but also rehabilitated, on 14th Street. We have protected and improved the diversity of Ward 1. To alleviate homelessness, I will seek funds to create more city services jobs that hire and train homeless and low-income residents. We've had great success in this with The Green Team Project, which I authored a few years back.

7) Do you think reform in the D.C. Public Schools is headed in the right direction? Explain your answer.

Yes, I do believe the DC Public School Reform is headed in the right direction. When the Mayor made the controversial decision to create an Office of the Chancellor reporting directly to the Mayor, I supported that decision. While it has taken a little

time to see results, there have been increases in math scores on standardized tests in the past few months. Like everyone else, I would like to see instantaneous improvements in the DC Public Schools; however, that is unreasonable. The reforms the Chancellor has made are proving to be effective and I believe that the reforms she's implemented should be given additional time to work.

8) What policies do you recommend for reducing crime and increasing public safety in the District of Columbia?

I believe in taking a preventive approach to reducing crime and increasing public safety in the District. This means ensuring that the DC Public School system properly prepares youth to compete for jobs and providing adult learning opportunities in the city. In terms of policies, I am an advocate and have pushed for a city-wide gang prevention strategy, including the Citywide Coordinating Council on Youth Violence Prevention, which built a city-wide network of community-based organizations to target gang violence. I have also led the effort over the past few years to increase the number of MPD officers, and to make sure that they are committed to the neighborhood. Also, I am the author of the MPD reimbursable officer program which subsidizes salaries for police officers to be in entertainment areas in the wee hours of the weekend mornings. This has resulted in a sharp decline in violence at clubs. I also pushed for crime cameras outside of 12 Metro stations, including two in Ward One. I believe that crime cameras should be installed at more Metro stations since current ones seem to be working as crime deterrents. To ensure that the District has an adequate police force, I would recommend more benefits for District police officers, such as greater freedom to take squad cars home. Not only does it reduce crime on city streets where the cars are parked, but it also is a convenience for the officers.

9) What are the three most important steps that need to be taken to revitalize the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority?

The three steps needed to revitalize WMATA are: securing more dedicated revenue for the system; improving the safety record of the system; and replacing aging equipment and railcars. All of that is now underway. We have ordered replacement cars for the 1000 series, and we now have \$300 million annual in new capital funding from the compact jurisdictions and the Federal government. I have also introduced a bill to establish a dedicated increase in fuel tax for Metro. If the other compact jurisdictions will act on this bill, we will have at long last a dedicated tax source for the system. A number of steps have been taken in the past year to improve safety, including strengthening of the TriState Oversight committee.

10) If (re)elected, what steps will you take to invigorate the D.C. statehood movement?

If reelected, I would push the DC Council and the community-based organizations working with its Committee on Statehood and Self-Determination to focus its efforts on educating people in other states about the DC statehood movement. It will be helpful to launch TV ads in those states where support for statehood looks promising. A point that should be highlighted in the messaging is that if DC were a state, representatives and Senators with seats on the various Congressional DC oversight committees will be freed up to spend more time focusing on the needs of their own states than micromanaging the District's affairs. As I said earlier, DC must also put Congress in increasing uncomfortable situations in which they are trying to block democracy for our cities. These efforts to block democracy for District residents must be explained in these other states, especially ones in which the representatives are sympathetic, but remain on the fence about fully supporting statehood.

11) A moratorium on earmarks was declared in Fiscal Year 2010. Do you think past practices for awarding earmark grants should be reformed? If so, how?

Yes, I believe that past practices of awarding earmarks should be reformed. While I am not for totally eliminating earmarks, I believe there should be more transparency in the process. There are some worthwhile projects and organizations that provide necessary services for the city. Earmarking money for those projects ensures that they will continue. However, excessive earmarks have paralyzed the city's budget process and must be curtailed. There should be limits on how much each Council member can earmark and that they have the burden of proof to show why a particular program or organization is worthy of an earmark. I have found in most cases that if I support a program or organization strongly enough, I can find resources from the people in the local community who are willing to support those programs or organizations. That frees up money for some of the more essential city services.

12) The District's election laws do not allow the rights of minorities to be subject to popular vote. Do you nevertheless think the District's new Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Law should be put up for popular vote? Why or why not?

I do not believe that the District's new Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Law should be subject to popular vote. DC has one of the most progressive human rights ordinances in the country. It ensures that no matter what the majority population believes, the rights of a minority group should not be put up to popular vote. In co-sponsoring and voting for the civil marriage equality law, I was taking a stand for a basic human right - the right to marry. Our basic rights are protected by the city's human rights act and the US Constitution's Bill of Rights. Granting the right of civil marriage to same-sex couples did not infringe on the rights of any other citizens. In

fact, the law affirms the right of any spiritual leader to refuse to solemnize any marriage, if they feel that marriage violates their right to free exercise of religion. I would not suggest that the free exercise of religion be put to a popular vote, so neither should marriage equality be subject to such a vote.

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