

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

As Council Chairman, I will ensure that the D.C. City Council remains a strong, independent voice for District residents through open, transparent, and accountable governance. I will lead a unified Council to promote policies that improve the everyday lives of District residents.

As a native Washingtonian and a graduate of D.C. public schools, I was raised with a strong belief in core Democratic values. I will continue to fight to enhance the quality of life for our residents by improving our schools and continuing with education reform, providing more job opportunities for our residents, ensuring our city's fiscal health, and continuing to make our neighborhoods safer.

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

There is one overarching challenge facing the District over the next decade. 1 in 3 children in the District of Columbia are born into poverty. This issue is caused by some of the District's problems (high unemployment, little access to job training programs) and causes other problems (school dropout rates, juvenile crime). The District has come a long way in the past decade, but we have a long way to go and we can do better. I believe every resident deserves the opportunity to participate in and enjoy all that our nation's capital has to offer.

- 3) What are your qualifications to serve as City Council Chair?

I am a native Washingtonian. I bring more than 15 years of practical private sector and non-profit experience to the D.C. City Council. I've been on the Council for almost six years and have received significant support from all 8 Wards of the city in every one of my elections. My electoral record shows that I am capable of unifying the District and leading a united city towards a common goal. While on the Council, I have proven my ability to unify my colleagues behind common goals and large-scale reforms. I have introduced or co-sponsored over 174 pieces of legislation that have become law from 2005-2010 – most aimed at addressing our city's unemployment rate and supporting local businesses. Specifically, I led a united Council in reorganizing National Capital Revitalization Corporation and the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation. I led a united Council in reopening Phelps High School as a vocational education campus. I led a united Council in creating the Compliance Unit within the DC Auditor's office to monitor completed development projects. I am qualified to be Chair because I can unify both the residents of the District and my Council colleagues behind big policy initiatives that improve the everyday lives of our residents.

In this election, I am also proud to say that have received the endorsement of ten of my colleagues, Ward 1 Councilmember Jim Graham, Ward 2 Councilmember Jack Evans, Ward 3 Councilmember Mary Cheh, Ward 5 Councilmember Harry Thomas, Ward 6 Councilmember

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Harry Thomas, Ward 7 Councilmember Yvette Alexander, Ward 8 Councilmember Marion Barry, and At-Large Council members David Catania and Michael Brown.

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?

I do not believe that the current budget discussion fairly balances increases in revenue against spending reductions, and fairly allocates the burden of revenue increases. This has been a very difficult budget process because we no longer have stimulus funding; policy-driven costs must remain nearly flat; and revenues are in decline. Almost \$100 million in fee increases will be borne by: the District's small businesses, cuts in adult job training, the District's Earned Income Tax Credit, and aid to grandparents raising grandchildren. This proposed budget does not reflect the values of our city. The Council will have to make difficult decisions in the next 6-8 weeks to restore the cuts that hurt our residents and rescind the fee increases that hurt our small businesses and residents, while at the same time balancing the budget.

As Chair of the Committee on Economic Development, my objective is to push initiatives that produce the right climate for job creation, local business expansion, and neighborhood revitalization through economic development. Further, the financial data provided by the CFO's office in this year's proposed budget will be analyzed to ensure that we know where dollars are being allocated and that they correspond to our proposed budget directives.

Last, I will work closely with Chairman Vincent Gray and my colleagues to restore funding to several existing—and vital—programs that have a direct impact on the lives of our citizens.

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.

I believe that we need to expand access to vocational education and adult job training programs so that our residents are qualified for the jobs that are actually seeing increases in employment demand in our City. That is why I fought to reopen and keep the Phelps High School, Construction Academy at Cardozo High School, and Hospitality High at Roosevelt High School open at night so that adults have the opportunity to develop the skills needed for career growth. Additionally, I worked to include \$2 million in funding and passed the Get D.C. Residents Training for Jobs Now Act, which is training nearly 150 adult District residents right now.

In addition, I included \$2 million for job training as part of the District's Convention Center Hotel Financing Legislation; established hiring standards and a "Workforce Development Plan" as part of the historic Energy Efficiency Financing Act, which will help homeowners and businesses make green improvements to their properties while helping District residents secure and prepare for jobs in the growing green building industry.

As the Chair of the Committee on Economic Development, I have also worked to ensure that economic development includes more than just real estate development – it means attracting

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At-Large Councilmember Kwame Brown, Candidate for Council Chair

companies to the District, having a comprehensive workforce development plan, and ensuring that tax abatements translate into real jobs for District residents.

6) D.C. currently has a rainy day fund that is subject to restrictive local and federal rules. Do you support efforts to reform rules governing the use of this fund? Why or why not?

Yes, the Council and the Mayor should have the ability to decide how the fund is used without Congressional oversight.

7) If (re) elected, what will you do to create and protect affordable housing options for both homebuyers and tenants, and alleviate homelessness?

When I first ran for Council in 2004, I promised to make affordable housing a priority as Councilmember. I have kept that promise. To make housing more affordable, I supported new laws, such as:

- The Rental Control Reform Act of 2006, which prevents a landlord from raising the rent of a vacant rental unit by more than 10%. The Act also protects your right to information by requiring the housing provider to disclose important information regarding current and previous rent increases.
- The Right of Tenants to Organize Amendment Act of 2006, which ensures that tenants can organize freely.
- The DC Housing Authority Rent Supplement Act of 2006 to establish a rent supplement program to help private and non-profit housing providers offer affordable rents to low-income families [DC Code 6-201 (2006)]. This program is currently enabling 1,700 District families to live in safe, clean, affordable housing
- The Own Your Own Home Act of 2007 to provide tenants of public housing with the ability to purchase their current homes according to the Home Ownership Plan
- Additional legislation:
 - Estate and Inheritance Tax Re-coupling Act of 2007
 - Evictions with Dignity Amendment Act of 2007
 - Office of Tenant Advocate Clarification Amendment Act of 2007
 - Affordable Housing Clearinghouse Directory Act of 2007
 - Section 8 Preservation Act of 2007
- Workforce Housing Production Program: Created the Workforce housing production program to develop housing affordable to the District's government employees
- Zoning: Passed the inclusionary zoning program

While these measures were and are helpful to thousands of District residents every year, more must be done. Approximately 26,000 D.C. households are currently on a waiting list for affordable housing in D.C. About 40 percent of D.C. households have affordable housing problems, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

Approximately 20 percent of D.C. households have severe housing affordability problems, meaning they spend half or more of their income on housing alone.

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As Council Chair I will:

- See that the Council monitors the inclusionary zoning program to ensure it is enforced
- Ensure that the District's housing subsidies are used in an effective and efficient manner in order to maximize the number of units created
- Streamline the District's affordable housing production and preservation programs.

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

Yes. I think that DCPS is in a better place now than six years ago. I am proud of the fact that I was one of the three original co-sponsors of the School Modernization program that is now modernizing our schools and providing our children with 21st Century classrooms. As a parent of 2 kids in DCPS, I believe that the quality of education in our classrooms is also improved over six years ago. There is a hope and optimism among DCPS parents now that I have not seen in years. I plan to continue to support reform efforts but I also want to ensure that parents and guardians are involved every step of the way. Education reform needs to be inclusive.

9) If elected City Council Chair, what steps will you take to invigorate the D.C. statehood movement?

As a Councilmember, I authored the bill Taxation Without Representation Federal Tax Pay Out Message Board Installation Act of 2007, which posted an electronic sign in front of the John A. Wilson Building itemizing the amount of federal tax dollars District residents pay without having the right to vote in Congress. I did so to raise awareness during the Presidential Inauguration ceremonies. Most recently, I opposed the recent D.C. Voting Rights bill in Congress because I believe that the District should not have to endanger its residents by gutting its gun control laws in return for our right to representation in Congress.

As Council Chair, I will push to provide local funding to a reinvigorated statehood movement. I believe that it is past time for a new Statehood Convention to be held to write a new Statehood charter to be submitted to Congress.

10) 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?

The Council has passed earmark reform and I supported the efforts.

11) Cite an instance in your public career where you have compromised with those with whom you have disagreed in order to achieve a larger goal.

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Funding the baseball stadium is an example of a project that I disagreed with when I was first elected to the Council. I did, however, decide to support the project because I inserted legislative language that ensured that if the project was going to move forward, it should include a mechanism to ensure that District residents were employed, small businesses had the opportunity to participate, and that the funding would be there to build a modernized Phelps that would open the same year that the baseball stadium would open. Because of the compromise reached, the baseball stadium turned out to be one of the most successful projects where District residents participated in the construction in the last decade.

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 voted for marriage equality as a member of the Council. I feel that a person's civil rights cannot be denied at the ballot box.