

DC for Democracy Questionnaire: Leo Alexander

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

I want to be the next Mayor of the District of Columbia because I sincerely believe the District of Columbia should set the standard of excellence in the delivery of municipal services for the rest of the country to follow. My life experience and professional background in the private and public sectors has given me a unique perspective of what government could be with compassion, courage, and vision in its leader.

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

1) Government Efficiency 2) Education and 3) Employment

3) What are your qualifications to serve as mayor?

Executive Board Member of the Development Corporation of Columbia Heights (DCCH), 2005 - 2009.

Named the Delegate of the Year for the DC Federation of Civic Associations

Chairman of Public Relations Committee for the DC Federation of Civic Associations

Member of the Brightwood Civic Association, 1999

Director of the Office of Public Affairs and Communications for the DC Public Housing Authority

Vice President of Marketing and Public Affairs for DC General Hospital

News Reporter, NBC affiliate WRC-TV4 in Washington, DC, 1995

News Reporter, CBS affiliate WWL-TV4 in New Orleans, LA

News Reporter, CBS affiliate WKRK-TV5 in Mobile, AL, 1990

Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Sociology from University of South Alabama, 1990

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 have some basic fundamental differences on the current budget discussions. The economy is cyclical. During the good times it's important to save and build a reserve. During down turns, we should use our savings to supplement any revenue losses due to the economy in order to provide a continuation of municipal services. It is important that we continue to fully fund our social safety net services and programs in order to provide critical support to families most affected by the economy. We will address a culture of waste in DC government. I will order a top-to-bottom audit to uncover areas of potential abuse as well as to implement best practices. All of these taken together will allow revenue increases to be fairly allocated and will foster a culture of efficiency and public trust.

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

First, I plan to strengthen the First Source Agreement which protects jobs for Washingtonians on DC funded worksites. Second, I will reinstitute and emphasize a challenging vocational education curriculum for youth and adults to develop a trained and ready workforce in partnership with unions and business. Third, we will provide incentives for DC-based businesses to hire DC residents. And fourth, we are experiencing record unemployment in part because Washingtonians have been replaced by thousands of undocumented workers. I will sign E-Verify into law and write legislation to make it illegal for employers to hire undocumented employees.

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

I plan to partner with local banks to create a home-buying program on foreclosed properties in DC for District employees. As far as protecting our affordable housing stock, we will find a balance through rent control measures and incentives for developers and landlords. The situation with our homeless community is multifaceted. There are many issues to consider such as mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, simply down-on-their-luck and/or a combination of several of the above issues. I will create a single face to serve this population that is linked to government, non-profits, for-profit and faith community programs to leverage best practices to deliver needed services quickly and efficiently without overlap or redundancy. Each person will be given a needs assessment to determine the best strategy to assist and which one of our DC agencies/civic organizations/non-profits/faith community partners to best serve their needs.

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

DC Public School reform is critically necessary, but I don't agree with Team Fenty/Rhee's methods for achieving this goal of a "world class system" not to mention their much ballyhooed increase in test scores. There's a reason we have the smallest school district in the region, spend more per child than any other district and every year have the worst test scores. The teachers and students aren't the problem – the problem is that there are a significant number of families of DCPS students that are broken. A needs assessment will be given to every DCPS family receiving government assistance. This assessment will identify issues in the home whether they are with illiteracy, substance abuse, mental health, adult continuing education, chronic unemployment and/or job placement assistance. A holistic approach that addresses the entire spectrum to solving this problem is what is needed.

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

First, a priority shift at MPD to focus on violent perpetrators. Second, partner with the faith community to provide mentoring, tutorial services and community policing. And third, jobs.

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

1) A complete system-wide audit to identify areas of waste, opportunities for improvement in service delivery and safety enhancements. 2) Free fares for seniors during non-rush hour times and free metro passes for DCPS students. 3) Better lighting on pedestrian paths and increased placement of emergency call boxes.

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

I support statehood 100%. I will continue to fully fund all efforts for DC statehood.

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?

Not applicable. However, I recognize that bringing groups with diverse opinions together to identify answers to tough issues is a necessary step in finding workable solutions to problems...and compromise on all sides is sometimes necessary.

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?

Yes, I believe this law deserves a public referendum. DC residents should have the right to vote on critical issues facing the District of Columbia.