

DC for Democracy Questionnaire
April 3, 2012 Democratic Primary
US Representative (Shadow) - Nate Bennett Fleming

1. Why are you running for Shadow Representative, and if elected, what are the three most important things you intend to accomplish?

I am running for U.S. Representative because I believe that there is a need for strong leadership that will ensure that the movement for D.C. equal rights is strengthened. I believe that education and advocacy is needed within the D.C. government, in District neighborhoods, in the nonprofit/business community, in Congress, and throughout the nation. I also strongly believe that young people are the key to success in strengthening our movement. I am running because I feel that I have a vision for where I want our movement to go and I am passionate about getting others motivated and involved.

If elected, the three most important things I intend to accomplish are as follows:

Advocating for more resources from the District Government and from D.C.'s business/non profit community towards our fight for equal rights.

Running educational campaigns inside the District to encourage more support from D.C. residents and to coordinate strategy amongst the wide variety of participants in the Statehood movement.

i.e. (State of Statehood Forum, Statehood Summits with stakeholders to coordinate and draft specific plans of actions, Statehood annual report, school visits, community meeting visits, essay/art/oratorical contests aimed at youth)

Executing a stronger, more aggressive lobbying campaign for D.C. Statehood legislation in the house by 1) engaging D.C.'s professional lobbying/business community, 2) organizing nationally by using D.C. based national organizations and students on college campuses to reach out to Members of Congress throughout the country, and 3) consistently using traditional Congressional lobbying methods by focusing on leadership/key members and caucuses for building support in the House..

2. What are your qualifications to serve as Shadow Representative?

Former Intern to Congresswoman Eleanor H. Norton
Experience organizing students as Campus Coordinator for Democracy Matters at

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Campaign Experience: Deputy National Director of African American Faith Outreach, Kerry-Edwards 2004; Regional Field Director, Ben Cardin for U.S. Senate 2006

Congressional Affairs Experience: Summer Associate at Patton Boggs LLP; Summer Associate at Alston Bird LLP; Legal Fellow, House Subcommittee on Capital Markets and GSE's

Community Experience: Representative to DC Voting Rights Coalition for Anacostia Coordinating Council; Co-Founder and Executive Director of the D.C. Statehood Students Association

Former Candidate for U.S. Representative, receiving over 43,000 votes and the endorsements of numerous organizations

Academic: Graduate of Morehouse College; Juris Doctor, University of California, Berkeley; Public Leadership Fellow 2008-2010, Harvard Kennedy School of Government; Editor of Berkeley Business Law Journal, Berkeley Journal on African American Law and Policy, and Harvard Journal on African American Public Policy

3. What would you do in the short term to build momentum for the movement for DC statehood?

In the short term, I would engage and organize younger Washingtonians to build momentum in the movement. I also believe that stronger engagement is needed in neighborhood and community organization.

4. What would you do to build more active support from DC residents?

Education, as outlined above, is the key to building more active support from D.C. residents. I plan to write a biweekly column for a major news organization to update and encourage support from D.C. residents. I will also use basic campaign tactics (Metro station stops, commitment cards, meet and greets, etc.) to engineer support.

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5. What would you do to increase awareness among those outside the Washington metro area of the District of Columbia's lack of voting representation? Present your vision for the national campaign for DC rights in the fifty states.

If afforded the resources, a strong piece of my national campaign efforts would be focused on organizing students on college campuses throughout the United States. I think this is the most efficient, cost effective method to have a strong movement in the vast number of Congressional Districts that we must advocate in. The overall goal of our efforts should be to train young people to be effective grassroots organizers and advocates. Our effort will mentor the next generation of leaders dedicated to strengthening democracy in the District of Columbia. We would need to identify, incent, and equip campus coordinators on the targeted college campuses.

Once identified, our coordinators should institute a three-phase program. The three steps include: (1) organize and educate a core group of peers, (2) develop and run a series of campaigns designed to raise awareness on campus, and (3) activate people to move off-campus to work with community members at a local, state, and federal level on initiatives to build support for DC Statehood. We can create an online training module that can educate coordinators on their responsibilities and assist them in creating an action plan to organize that is turned in to staffers in the Shadow Delegation's office. We can support campaigns by giving practical guidance on executing action campaigns on the website. We should then support off-campus activities where Campus Chapters can

- Work with local and state coalitions.
- Sponsor local legislation.
- Support statewide and national DC Statehood initiatives
- Raise awareness through leafleting, door-to-door canvassing and community rallies.
- Develop relationships with local and regional media.

Campus Coordinators should be expected to work 10 hours/week

Campus Coordinator Responsibilities:

Build coalitions of student activists on campus.

Create a Students for DC chapter that can work with students, faculty, and

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community activists to win D.C. equal rights

Organize at least four campaigns/events per semester :

Receive training and guidance from a staff link who will work with to develop skills as an organizer.

Receive materials – banner, flyers, DVDs, t-shirts, stickers, and pins – to spread across your campus.

Sample Action Campaigns

- Flyers/Posters/Handbills
- In Class Presentations
- Film Screenings
- Petitions
- Faculty Outreach (adopt a faculty member)
- Letter Writing Parties
- RA and Dorm Presentations
- Voter Registration Campaigns
- Building Campus Coalitions
- First Year Orientation Outreach
- Poster Parties
- Holiday Celebrations
- Student Faculty Dialogues
- Open Mics
- Debates
- Facebook for Social Action
- Twitter for Social Action
- Sample Letters to Elected Officials
- Poetry Slams
- Media Campaigns

Further Thoughts

- We could organize Grassroots Politics workshops on campuses to teach others how to be grassroots activists, how to lobby elected representatives, or how to talk about an issue they care about.

- We could hold Campus Call In Days so that students can advocate to their elected officials.

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- We could hold coordinated lobby days with students throughout the country.
- Website should include sample/model constitutions for chapters.

- We should develop a student summit where organizers can meet with students from across the country and attend workshops to build skills and issue awareness.
- Think about the possibility of giving Campus Coordinators \$500 scholarships per semester.
- Encourage Chapters to develop their own websites.

- A Campus Activism Blog should be set up for campus coordinators to write about the variety of campaigns and events they have been organizing around the country. This allows us to get to know more about what each campus is doing as well creating a medium for healthy competition amongst the chapters.

- We can create a Speakers Bank of surrogate speakers who can be available to travel the country to speak to campus groups.

- High School Outreach (Creating the High School Fellows Program)