

**DC for Democracy Questionnaire
April 3, 2012 Democratic Primary
Ward 7 Council - Yvette Alexander**

1. Why are you running for City Council, and if (re)elected, what are the priority areas you intend to concentrate on in the near term?

I am running for City Council to continue the work that I have worked on for the last 4 years. First, we have made significant progress bringing public dollars to Ward 7 including \$100 million for the new H.D. Woodson High School, \$60 million for the new Department of Employment Services Headquarters, \$33 million for the new Deanwood Recreation Center and millions more for 3 new libraries, Great Streets projects and more.

Also; we have made great progress in reducing serious crime in the ward.

New economic development projects are coming to fruition like the new Donatelli project with 300 housing units and retail.

We are bringing new educational opportunities like the Educare facility which is a world class early learning facility.

All of these public projects will lead to more than \$1 billion dollars in private development which we will get done.

It is a very exciting time in ward 7.

2. With unemployment, homelessness, and general economic distress at historically high levels, do you favor increasing safety net spending in future budgets? If yes, which programs should be given highest priority?

I favor maintaining the levels of monies to our safety net programs and increasing our job training initiatives and opportunities. Having the new Department of Employment Services Headquarters in Ward 7 we must work hard to improve the opportunities for Ward 7 and District of Columbia residents.

3. Do you consider the District's total current budget to be too large, too small, or about right? Please explain.

The total budget is about right. Over the last few years we have tightened our belt and in many ways this was good although we need to maintain our vigilance and

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protection of our most vulnerable residents as well as sustaining our commitment to education.

4. Last year, income taxes for those earning above \$350,000 were increased from 8.5% to 8.95%, subject to a “sunset” provision after 4 years. With this temporary increase, all taxpayers earning between \$40,000 and \$350,000 remain subject to the 8.5% rate. Do you believe this is fair? If not, what would you propose?

I believe that 8.5% is the rate that allows the District to sustain the levels that make us a world class city.

5. What recently revitalized DC neighborhood would you suggest as the best model for the city as a whole, and why?

Deanwood is an tremendous example of a revitalized neighborhood. The \$33 million dollar recreation center being a centerpiece to a new neighborhood walk, a fantastic Deanwood Mainstreets program, and enthusiastic residents who have a unified goal moving forward.

Deanwood is a model community.

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

In Ward 7 the backbone of every development project is affordable housing. In short we use all of the tools available to us including tax abatement, federal subsidies, local matching dollars and motivated developers to make all properties coming on line affordable and conducive to the community.

7. Do you think reform in the DC public schools is headed in the right direction? Explain your answer.

I am pleased that reform is a constant topic of conversation. The more residents involved in the education discussion the better off our young people will be. I am glad that we are trying to evaluate all aspects of our schools including teachers and schools and I believe that we should continue to refine these efforts.

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We have exciting things happening in our Ward 7 schools.

I believe all educational issues should be on the table.

8. How do you suggest that we repurpose the large number of school properties that have been closed over the past few years? Cite specific schools/communities as examples, if possible.

We have several schools in ward 7 that are vacant. Two in particular are Merritt and Fletcher Johnson.

Merritt has been considered for the new Ward 7 6D police headquarters. This is an idea that can be positive and should receive further review.

Fletcher Johnson was used as the school that Woodson students attended during the new school construction. This is a huge facility which could have many uses. The community should be brought in to a discussion about potential uses here.

I also believe that Charter Schools should have an opportunity to be considered for vacant school facilities.

9. What are the most important steps that need to be taken to reform the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority?

Ward 7 has a great transportation community group that effectively lobbied to get the Circulator East of the River and reviews the current bus lines for improvements. I think that community driven changes to WAMATA are what is needed and Ward 7 has great suggestions for our Ward 7 routes.

10. Do you support funding the DC statehood campaign in the 2013 budget? If so, what amount would you support and for what purposes?

I do support funding the DC Statehood campaign. I do not have a dollar amount in mind but it should be enough to support tremendous advocacy and multicity travel in support of this effort

11. Do you believe that the current DC Council represents the interests of the

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broad public? If not, what segments of the public are underrepresented?

I do believe that the DC Council represents the broad public. Each Ward has a representative as well as four at large councilmembers and the Chairman. In addition and even though your question does not address this the ANC's play a essential role in the representation of DC residents.

12. Do you support the creation of an independent ethics commission with members nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council, as provided for in the newly enacted ethics reform legislation? Please explain your position.

I support the ethics legislation recently passed by the DC Council.

13. Unlike most states, the District allows entities under contract with or soliciting contracts from the city to contribute to political campaigns. Is this a problem which future legislation should address, and, if so, how? Should DC ban all corporate contributions?

I do not believe the District should ban corporate contributions. I believe in full and complete transparency.

14. Do you support the use of Constituent Service Funds (CSFs)? If so, why? If not, would you be willing to work for their elimination?

I support the use of Constituent Funds. The requests that come in to my office as the Ward 7 Councilmember are many, varied, and unique to my ward. I have seen firsthand the good that these funds can do. I support full transparency in constituent funds as well.

15. What should DC do to improve its job-training programs?

I think Mayor Gray is on the right track. I believe that we must bring in more of the business community to participate in the process of job opportunity and training as is being done. I also believe that those looking for a job should register with the Department of Employment Services so that we can better connect job skills with job openings, and train those who we are aware are looking for work.