

ECONOMY & JOBS

1. Given the strong economic and population growth in recent years, we can all agree that this city is now a hot place to live and work. Going forward, what criteria should justify the use of DC taxpayer funds for economic development?

The District is thriving and is currently one of the hottest real estate markets in the country. Both new businesses and new residents are clamoring to move into the District. However, all communities are not experiencing this economic growth. Thus, when the District is using taxpayer funds for economic development, it is imperative that the criteria for using these funds be heavily skewed towards promoting development in underserved communities. As much as possible, taxpayer dollars/funds should be used to encourage development in places where it otherwise would not occur and where neighborhoods are receptive to development.

2. The tipped minimum wage has been frozen at \$2.77/hr in DC for over 20 years. Meanwhile, the Minimum Wage Act left out the issue of tipped minimum wages. Would you support an increase in the tipped minimum wage, and to what level?

Yes, I would support an increase in the tipped minimum wage. When the Minimum Wage Act came before the Council, there was not a consensus among the tipped workers as to the level of increase they were seeking. Therefore, the Council passed the legislation without citing a specific number. Next steps should involve the Council continuing discussions with tipped workers and restaurant owners to develop an appropriate level of increase.

TAXATION

3. The Tax Revision Commission was presented with clear, official data showing that the District's current tax system is regressive. The Commission has recommended some proposals to reduce this

regressivity. Are you comfortable with their proposals in this regard? What further changes would you propose, if any?

I am comfortable with the Tax Revision Commission's recommended proposals, however, the Commission could have gone further to address the District's regressive tax system. The Commission's proposals ensure that the District comes across as business-friendly through recommendations for reduction in commercial taxes to match the rate in Maryland, but little was said to protect the interests of middle and moderate-income residents. I strongly support lowering the tax bracket for those who make between \$40,000 to \$80,000 per year from 8.5 percent to 6.5 percent. I also support maintaining a higher tax rate of 8.95 percent for single individuals who earn over \$200,000 and couples who earn over \$350,000 per year.

Furthermore, I believe that the tax burden should be lessened on low and moderate-income individuals, which is why I recently introduced the Standard Deduction Adjustment Act of 2013 to increase the standard deduction for those making less than \$40,000. This would provide cash assistance to our most vulnerable residents, which could be used to assist in paying for rent, groceries or other basic necessities. I am open to additional changes that would further address the goal of making the District's tax system more progressive.

4. DC has a reputation as a high-tax jurisdiction that drives investment and wealthy families out of the District. In reality, how big a problem is this?

DC's tax rate is not having an adverse effect on investment or residential choices. This is purely a myth. I have not been presented with any evidence that wealthy families are moving out of the District because of high taxes. To the contrary, the District's population is larger than it has been in decades. Recent U.S. Census figures show that the District's population is growing at a rate of 1,200 persons per month, of which the majority move to DC with jobs paying at the high end of the average wage scale.

ELECTION REFORM

5. In order to reduce the influence of large contributors on legislation, a number of states and localities have turned to public financing. Do you in general favor public financing, and if so, what model(s) do you recommend?

Yes, I generally favor public financing. Candidates should have the choice whether or not to use public financing. It would give new voices a greater chance to have their views heard and possibly get elected, while not disadvantaging candidates who prefer to opt out of public financing.

6. The electoral system in DC allows candidates to be elected to office with a plurality, not a majority, of votes. Do you support any type of runoff system of voting? If yes, what mechanism do you favor? If not, why not?

I am not opposed to the current system.

HOUSING

7. Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie has introduced a bill (Disposition of District Land for Affordable Housing Amendment Act of 2013), which includes a requirement that private developments on surplus public lands with transit access (1/2 mile of metro station or 1/4 mile of major bus route/streetcar line) to provide at least 30% of rental units to be set aside for very-low to low-income households. Would you support this bill? Why or why not?

I co-introduced this bill with Councilmembers McDuffie, Bowser, and Graham and I fully support it. I strongly believe that it is important for the District to provide transit-accessible housing for low and very-low income individuals. Many low-income families are mass transit dependent and the lack of access to transportation is often an impediment for low-income individuals and families in finding and maintaining gainful employment. This legislation will create vibrant, mixed-income communities near mass transit and will give low-income households the opportunity to live in a community where

they will have greater access to opportunities.

EDUCATION

8. The percentage of children in traditional public schools has declined dramatically in DC and is now, at 56%, the third lowest in the nation. Should we be concerned about this trend? If so, what should be done to halt or reverse it? If not, what changes would you propose to accommodate to the trend?

Yes, we should be concerned because District families are sending a message that they do not believe that their children can receive a good education in the traditional public school system. Thus, they are choosing to leave the traditional public school system in favor of the public charter school system. As you are aware, recent student test scores were the best in a national measure with the 50 states and the District of Columbia, so DC schools are improving. I want families to feel comfortable sending their children to any school in the city. We need to continue improving all of our schools so that all of our children receive a top-notch education.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

9. What would you do to improve job and living prospects for the high number of returning citizens in DC?

I recently co-introduced the "Fair Criminal Record Screening Act of 2014." This bill would prohibit all DC employers from requesting the criminal history of applicants until a conditional offer of employment is furnished to the candidate. I believe that when individuals have paid their debt to society and have served their time, they have as equal of a right as anyone else to obtain gainful employment without discrimination due to past mistakes. Furthermore, I am currently working on legislation to purge records of certain returning citizens who demonstrate that they have become productive members of society. The criteria to qualify would be specified in the legislation.