

DC for Democracy Questionnaire
April 2014 Primary, Mayor (Democrat)
Vincent Orange

ECONOMY & JOBS

1. The District of Columbia is currently implementing an economic development strategy that defines as one of its goals being the most business-friendly economy in the nation. What do you think of this goal, and how would you revise it, if at all?

I think this goal should be resident-friendly economy. Economic development must work for the residents. That is economic development should improve the quality of life for DC residents. In particular, economic development should led to good paying jobs, access to affordable housing and healthcare, and a good education.

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?

Personally, I support the tipped minimum being 70% of the minimum wage. I introduced the Bill for a minimum wage of \$12.50 and the tipped wage being 70% of the minimum wage. However, we were only able to pass a minimum wage of \$11.50 with annual increases, paid sick leave for tipped workers at the minimum wage rate and more DOES personnel to ensure the minimum wage is being paid to the tipped wage worker.

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?

Yes, I'm comfortable with the proposals to reduce regressively. I am not thrilled with raising \$28 million through the expansion of sale tax to haircuts, exercise, and other personal services. Also, I question increasing the threshold for estate tax exemption from \$1 million to \$5.75 million which will cost \$15.7 million.

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? Not a big problem at all.

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? I could support public financing. However, the devil is in the details.

HOUSING

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6. How do you define affordable housing? What are your priorities short-term and longer-term, for remedying the affordable housing crisis in the District?

Certainly not by 80% of AMI. Affordable housing is where a house can be procured with a \$25,000 household income, a \$35,000, 45,000 or \$50,000 household income. I will fund the Housing Production Trust Fund and use it to build the New Communities Initiative which is low income housing being built in Deanwood, Anacostia, NoMa and Parkview.

EDUCATION

7. 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 with this trend. We should place a moratorium on chartered schools until we increase the viable of public schools.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

8. Racial disparities in arrests and convictions for marijuana possession in DC are well known. Efforts to decriminalize or legalize marijuana are underway in multiple states today. What are your views on these two policy options? I think we should decriminalize marijuana. We should also gather more information and start the discussion on how to get ready for legalization.

ENVIRONMENT

9. A provision in Mayor Gray's "Sustainable DC Omnibus Act of 2013" abolishes the Advisory Board of the Sustainable Energy Utility (SEU), an entity designed to administer energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. The board was created in the 2008 Clean and Affordable Energy Act to provide advice and recommendations regarding the procurement and administration of the Utility. How would you define the role of citizens participating in the design of policies and communication of information regarding environmental resources in the city? I do not support the abolishment of the Advisory Board of the Sustainable Energy Utility. The role of citizens participating in the design of policies and the communication of information regarding environmental resources is extremely important.