

DC for Democracy 2014 Shadow Senator Questionnaire

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

Failure of leadership, and a lack of vision and direction has stifled the movement for equality and justice for DC residents. Instead of moving us forward, our current U.S. Senator has done very little to elevate the office and by inaction has contributed to a climate of indifference toward DC Voting Rights and Statehood. I want to ignite a new fervor and a renewed activism; I want to restore faith in our cause, so that the District residents as well as the nation can believe again in the righteousness of our pursuits. Only a change in leadership and direction can move us forward again.

The first thing I intend to do upon being elected is to reconnect the office with the people which it serves. I intend to use this office to reach out to the youth, to get them involved, to hear their ideas, to educate them in the struggle to move their city forward, and to motivate them to pick up the banner and march onward. I want to use this office to inspire a new generation of civil rights leaders, and to give hope to those who may now feel hopeless.

I want to continue reaching out to our seniors and returning citizens and let them know that their talents are appreciated, and that they still have contributions to make to their community. And finally, I want to forge a national network of activists and like-minded supporters that will bring our cause to every state capital across the nation.

2. What are your qualifications to serve as Shadow Representative, and what have you done to promote statehood?

I am the founder, owner, and President of an acrylic manufacturing company that has been in business for over 25 years and have employed many DC residents. Through operating and growing this company nationally and internationally, I have developed a deep appreciation for the value that diversity in the workplace can contribute to business success. Like many in DC, I have stumbled and fallen, and have ended up on the wrong side of the law. But, like others, I have picked myself up and have risen again. I have reached out to help our returning citizens do the same by offering jobs and trying to serve as a role model. I have been a leader in my community, a past president of the Foxhall Citizens Association and a DC voting rights and statehood advocate for the past 20 years. I am at a point in my life where I can devote full time to this office. Through my business career, I have honed the skills to successfully manage the duties and responsibilities of the office.

As for promoting DC Statehood, I am, as far as I know, the only individual has actually sentenced to jail time for standing up for D.C. Statehood.

http://dcist.com/2011/12/four_arrested_in_brief_voting_right.php
http://dcist.com/2012/03/shadow_senator_candidate_spends_six.php

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

If elected on April 1st, I would immediately launch two national online petitions (WhiteHouse.gov and Change.org) to inform the nation of DC's lack of voting rights, and to demand individual members of congress and the president support DC Statehood. I would reach out to the various candidates that will participating in DC's general election, including nearly 300 ANC Commissioners, and ask that they adopt DC Statehood and promotion of the national petitions as part of their campaign platform.

4. If you could create your dream organization to promote statehood, what would it look like?

My Dream Organization would consist of a hundred dedicated volunteers and supporters to coordinate the efforts of our nation-wide network of a thousand supporters that would lobby their state and federal legislators, on behalf of the District of Columbia.

My office would consist of a mixture of paid staff, volunteers and interns, that would include a dozen outreach coordinators, one for each ward; in addition to national, international, and Federal outreach efforts. I would also have dedicated outreach coordinator to work exclusively on improving the coordination of efforts between my office and the various DC Voting Rights and Statehood groups and activists. I would commit to raising funds to provide several paid internships, exclusively for DC public and private high school students and graduates.

5. What would you do to increase awareness among those outside the Washington metro area and increase support in the states for the New Columbia Admission Act?

I would immediately start organizing trips for DC Statehood activists and supporters to visit each State Legislature to lobby for a Resolution in support of the New Columbia Admission Act.