

1. What motivates you to seek the position of Delegate?

I have a strong sense that the Delegate position is currently underutilized. We're inconsistent on our push for Statehood, often going several years without introducing a bill. I think we tend to treat the position as almost an honorary one, when there are real issues facing the District that need Federal coordination, both with regards to our status and the myriad of intersections we have with the feds by virtue of being the national capital.

2. What are your qualifications to serve as Delegate?

I bring a strong local perspective to the role. We need a Delegate that is intimately familiar with our city and our history. As an author, historian, and tour guide, I have both a professional and personal depth of knowledge that will serve me well. Additionally, as a former Naval Officer, I can speak authoritatively about the use of our military as well as controlling its costs, a not insignificant consideration as defense spending is over half of all discretionary spending. I'm a public school parent as well, and am eager to bring a real world perspective to the discussion on national education policy.

3. What have you done to advocate for statehood for the people of the District of Columbia?

Until recently, I was like the overwhelming majority of District residents that believe in Statehood but saw it as an unwinnable battle. I think there are obvious challenges, but one thing I'd like to do with the race is push the discussion beyond the status quo. I have great admiration for those who have been in the trenches, but I think a new perspective will be useful to expand the movement.

4. What should be the focus of the statehood movement? Why?

To start with, we need consistency. We've been all over the map, from statehood to voting rights to the deal with Utah to no taxation and back to Statehood. We need to develop and hone a consistent message. This was a great year, with the first statehood hearing in two decades. It's critical that we use that momentum to build a better year tomorrow, and a clearly defined and defended message is vital for doing that.

5. What can and should the Delegate do to promote full citizenship rights for the people of the District of Columbia?

Obviously, there are many things the Delegate can do, but before anything else, the Delegate needs to introduce Statehood legislation each and every Congress and then seek to gather as many co-sponsors as possible. This has been sadly inconsistent. It's important to gather those cosponsors, as it provides a baseline for the next Congress. It's not glamorous, but it's vital legislative grunt work.

6. Including but not limited to the role of the Delegate, what strategy would you recommend to move the District forward in the fight for statehood?

I mentioned the legislative side a bit already, but I'd also begin with a public outreach. It's been three decades since the last public referendum on the issue, and a new campaign for that would let advocates articulate to residents why this is important and how they can be a part of the movement. Additionally, I'd challenge the Council to start wrestling with some of the weighty issues of how statehood is going to affect us. Most prominent of these is taking control, and paying for, our criminal justice system. It's not pleasant, but wrestling with those costs would be a tangible way the District could show it's done paying lip service to the statehood movement.

7. Recognizing the Delegate must work with the Mayor and Council on a broad range of matters pertaining to our relationship with the federal government, to what extent can or should the independently elected Delegate to Congress nevertheless speak out on issues of public policy confronting the people of the District.

If elected, my children will still attend public schools. I'll still use metro, buses and bikeshare to get around the city. I still demand and expect honest and transparent local government. I don't plan to drop advocacy of any of those things simply because the Delegate doesn't strictly speaking have a formal role in local issues.

That said, my role, both as an involved citizen and the Delegate, would be to work cooperatively with the other duly elected officials of the District of Columbia. And in the unlikely chance that legislation is passed I don't strictly agree with and becomes a focal point for Congressional interest, my personal feelings will be immaterial. The laws of the the District of Columbia should be decided the Mayor and Council, and the Delgate's job is to make sure Congress remembers that.