

## WARD COUNCIL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE – General Election

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### 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. However, this growth has not benefited many people, especially lower income and unemployed DC residents. How would you leverage taxpayer funds for economic development in ways that would benefit the neediest DC residents?

Housing has to be a top priority for our tax dollars, including providing subsidies to create more housing below 60 percent AMI, providing long term support to families at risk of losing their homes and for those we are moving out of homelessness, and funding programs that move more people into homeownership to give them long-term stability. We must also focus on workforce training and developing career paths in our public schools with after-school job programs and apprenticeships. And, we must continue to invest in transit so that working families can afford to get to work, school and recreational activities.

2. Seattle has enacted a minimum wage of \$15.00. San Francisco will vote on a ballot initiative in November of \$15.00 an hour for all workers. The mayor of Los Angeles has proposed a minimum wage of \$13.25, and Mayor Rahm Emanuel supports a \$13.00 minimum wage for Chicago. Should DC set its sights higher? If so, to what level and in what time frame? Should tipped workers get an increase as well? If so, to what level?

Yes. As a board member of JUFJ I joined in the effort to pass the minimum wage increase as well as to provide paid sick leave tipped workers. However, I would support an increase to a true living wage – I'm open to what rate that would be — and believe we must go back and get a wage increase for tipped workers. I'd support an increase to at least 70 percent of the standard minimum wage for tipped workers.

### TAXATION

3. In 2014, the DC Council enacted significant changes in tax law, many of which were recommended by the Tax Revision Commission. What do you think of these changes? What further changes would you propose, if any?

As a JUFJ board member I have spent the past several years focused on economic justice and workers rights. I testified before Tax Revision Commission to reduce sales tax on lower income earners using a refundable tax credit as well as increase in standard deduction and an increase in personal exemption for lowest earners. My full testimony can be found here: <http://briannefordc.com/nadeau-offers-testimony-at-d-c-tax-revision-commission-public->

[hearing/](#). While many of the concerns expressed in my testimony made it into the recommendations, I would still prefer the top marginal rate to be set at 8.95% and I was disappointed to see the raising of the estate tax threshold.

## ELECTION REFORM

4. Do you think that public financing of elections is an effective way to reduce the influence of large contributors on legislation? If yes, what model do you favor? If no, what alternative do you recommend?

Yes. I will fight for comprehensive reform that includes ending pay-to-play politics, providing greater transparency in contracting procedures, revokes Council review of contracting and supports a ban on corporate contributions.

I support Initiative 70, an effort to eliminate corporate contributions as well as the bill introduced by Councilmembers Grosso and Wells, "Campaign Finance Reform, Transparency and Accountability Act of 2013." This bill goes a long way toward the ethics reform by closing bundling loopholes, but there is more to do. I will support "Fair Elections DC," a bill that Councilmembers Grosso and McDuffie have introduced that provides for public financing of elections when candidates meet specific thresholds.

5. 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?

Yes. I support an instant runoff system, allowing voters to rank their preferences. I'd also be open to a system in which top two voter-getters advance to the general election.

## HOUSING

6. How do you propose we better use development projects on public land for affordable housing, particularly housing for low-income residents?

The public land and property disposition process needs serious revision to ensure the needs of the public are being served in the deal. This should involve not only housing set aside for those in 30, 50 and 80 percent AMI, it should also be tied to the creation of good jobs in the short term and long term through the development of the site.

The majority of the city's housing units are affordable to families earning greater than 60 percent of AMI, yet the greatest affordability pressures are borne by those persons earning less than 60 percent of AMI. Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie has introduced legislation to provide clearer definitions of affordable housing, which I support.

I'm proud to support the proposal to convert the property at 1125 Spring Road into affordable housing units with a 90 percent affordable makeup that includes subsidies and a 10% market-

rate ratio to help finance the project. This will be a great opportunity to take a public property and fulfill a desperate need for affordable housing. In this case, nearly 200 new units.

I live in a mixed income condo building on a parcel formerly owned by the National Capitol Revitalization Corporation. In exchange for the land equity, the developer of my property made a commitment of providing 20 percent of the units at affordable rates. I purchased my own unit through the Home Purchase Assistance Program, which provided down payment assistance. I believe we need to be putting much more energy and creativity into long-term solutions to the rising costs of housing in DC. In addition to ensuring that public lands being disposed for residential development include affordable units, we must be fully funding the Housing Production Trust Fund, expanding down payment assistance, and moving more people into homeownership and co-op, in addition to ensuring there is enough affordable housing for those below 60 percent AMI and enough family-sized affordable housing.

7. Are our rent control laws adequate? If not, what can be done to reduce the burden on tenants?

No. We need to examine the existing laws to get at the original intent – to provide safe, affordable housing to low-income residents. We must bring together residents and other stakeholders to ensure that any changes to the law still uphold the spirit of the law, maintaining affordability for future generations, but this will involve a discussion about how to ensure proper maintenance, a steady funding stream and creative financing for upkeep and upgrades, and how to keep rent low at the same time.

We must continue to preserve affordable housing units and ensure that they are properly maintained and upgraded over time. Fully funding the Housing Production Trust Fund can assist with this as well.

## 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?

I will bring back the community engagement piece that has been lost in our education reforms. We have seen in Ward 1 that when neighbors, parents, business owners and community leaders are given opportunities to support the schools, kids thrive. My conversations with teachers and principals have helped me map out a plan for working with non-profits, businesses and residents to bring comprehensive wrap-around services into the schools – healthcare, counseling, food pantries, after school jobs for older children – that lift up the at-risk population and allow classrooms to be places for real learning to take place. Once we've done that, we'll be attracting more families to our neighborhood schools.

## PLANNING

9. The Executive's zoning, planning and historic preservation functions report through the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED). In your view, does this structure work well for the city? If not, how would you alter it?

In my own experience working as an ANC and community leader on many of these issues, the current system is a good one in that it allows for community input in several different forums. That said, having a deputy mayor who is sensitive to public input while also balancing the long-term needs of the District is essential in making this work. I have seen how strong grassroots can influence development in their own community, in a good way. And also how the loudest voices can sometimes get more attention than is warranted, in a very bad way. The deputy mayor needs to have strong relationships with leaders throughout the community to navigate this reality. As Councilmember, I would work closely with the deputy mayor to ensure the implementation of the community vision in concert with the master plan and small area plans that have also been developed with strong input from the community.

Campaign finance and contracting reform will also help with ensuring a fair, non-political process for planning and economic development, which is another reason I strongly support these reforms.