

## ECONOMY AND JOBS

1. According to the American Communities Survey (US Census), DC's poverty rate has increased fairly steadily from about 16% in 2007 to about 19% today, which is higher than all but five US states. How would you bring this rate down? What targets would you set, if any?

The fact that about 19% of our residents currently live in poverty (compared to a 14.5% national average) is of immense concern to me, and combating this figure -- and the strain it reflects in our citizen's lives -- will be a top priority in the Schwartz administration. Poverty can only be ameliorated by a multifaceted approach that includes, principally, education, economic development, and affordable housing.

Without question, there is a direct correlation between an individual's education and their financial well-being: High school graduates earn 38% more than those who drop out prior to graduation. Thus, a critical step in addressing this issue is to affect change within our school system to ease disparity of resources and attention.

I have proposed a number of methods to raise academic achievement and improve graduation rates, including:

- Expand and Transform high-needs schools from centers of education to community centers with afternoon and weekend adult education programs, and offering wraparound services such as daycare, nursing and nutritional meals
- Issue a Call to Service from retired educators throughout the Metropolitan region to provide one-on-one tutoring and mentoring on a volunteer basis and provide transportation to those participating
- Offer More Extracurricular Programs, including sports, to keep students engaged in school
- Expand Magnet and Vocational academic opportunities, particularly with the goal of creating pathways that lead students towards careers of the future

All of these programs are designed to keep students engaged academically, regardless of their needs, but with the ultimate goal of successfully earning a high school diploma and having the tools to move on to the phase of their lives. If we were to improve DC's graduation rate of 52% in 2012 to 90%, according to the Alliance for Excellent Education, the District would realize: \$21 million in increased annual earnings, \$16 million in increased annual spending, \$30 million in increased home sales, and \$1.4 million in increased tax revenues for the District. While a graduation rate of 90% may be a lofty goal -- the national average is 80% -- there is no doubt that any increase in graduation rates will have a positive economic impact on our city as well as a positive impact on those individual's lives.

So not only should we drive the District's poverty rate down towards and beyond the national average, but we should also set goals and measure our success against improved graduation rates.

2. Seattle has enacted a minimum wage of \$15.00. San Francisco will vote on a ballot initiative in November to enact a minimum wage of \$15.00. 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 than the law enacted last year? If so, to what level and in what time frame?

I am for regular minimum-wage increases to keep pace not only with the cost of living, but also aim to

be near the forefront of these changes. I was pleased earlier this year when Mayor Gray signed into law an increase in the minimum wage for District workers from \$8.25 to \$11.50 by July 1, 2016, a 39% increase in under three years. However, those who work so hard for minimum wage know all-too-well how costs overwhelm salaries. I would look at more increases in the future, but we must also be conscious of the loss of jobs that could take place with such increases.

One way we can help impoverished workers' dollars go further is to help lessen their expenses, where possible. Rent commonly takes a disproportionately large (and growing) percentage of an individual's paycheck, squeezing many of our long-time residents out of the city they helped build into the boomtown (for many) today. It is for this reason I have made affordable housing a central tenet in my campaign.

Additionally, I cannot help but relate this question to the singular piece of legislation for which I am most proud of during my time on the Council: Securing sick and safe leave for part-time workers. Working with various stakeholders I was able to craft a version of the bill that not only give leave to part-time workers – many of whom earned minimum wage and were among the working poor – but did get support of some in the business community. It is worth noting that the original version of the bill placed an undue financial burden upon small businesses, an important sector of our local economy, which often lives on the edge so even though they have to provide some sick leave, we did not push them off that edge. Although I lost my Council position based on this important piece of legislation, I remain extremely proud of it and would do it all over again.

## TAXATION

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

I support many of the Tax Revision Commission's recommendations, particularly those related to income taxes, estate taxes and business taxes. .

I would say the Council made generally positive changes to the District's tax code, but I don't agree with them in their entirety. I believe we could have been more aggressive with the changes to the estate tax and income tax. In my nearly five decades as a District resident, I have been bothered by the taxes levied against our wealthiest taxpayers, creating an atmosphere whereby these individuals establish primary residency outside the District so as to pay lower rates in other jurisdictions. I have often said over the years that in our effort to gauge that last nickel from either residents or businesses we often end up with no nickels. Rather, let's keep this tax revenue here in the District, even if at a lower rate, and not just throw the baby out with the bathwater.

To that end, my priority would be to further modify the personal income tax and the estate tax. Most notably and worthy of re-evaluation are the newly defined personal income tax brackets and rates. As passed by the Council, the highest bracket only sees nominal changes if you make more than \$350,000 per year – though creating a new bracket between \$350,001 and \$1,000,000 is helpful. And the new middle class bracket of \$60,001 to \$350,000 is so broadly drawn it not only doesn't reflect the reality of life here in the District, but it does nothing to support middle class economic growth, particularly among individuals in the lower half of the bracket. In the case of the estate tax, which has been changed to align with the federal rate, I would argue to shorten its phase-in period so that it is implemented sooner than 2018 as currently planned.

I hope you remember that I have always introduced, supported and voted for tax relief all kinds, and my Council history reinforces that statement. For example, in the 1980s, long before it was fashionable, I lead the charge and was able to lower the maximum personal income taxes from the unbelievably high 11 percent it was then to 9.5 percent. I also introduced and passed (along with Nadine Winter) a law that coupled our inheritance tax to the federal government level which lowered the District tax significantly, and then voted against uncoupling them in the 2000's. I may be a registered Independent, but at my core I am and always will be a fiscal conservative who will fight to lower taxes while finding ways to achieve cost savings by eliminating waste, fraud and abuse wherever it may exist in the District government.

## ELECTION REFORM

4. Do you think that public financing of elections is an effective way to increase voter participation and reduce the influence of large contributors on legislation? If yes, what model do you favor? If not, what alternative do you recommend?

I have not supported public financing of elections in the past, nor do I currently. However, in seeing the enormous amounts that have gone into candidates' coffers through this election, and much of that money from developers, I am willing to at least consider public financing because I find the culture of pay-to-play so concerning.

It is alive and well in the election, even though the DC Council did pass a law to close the "LLC Loophole." Unfortunately that law does not go into effect until January of 2015, conveniently after this election is over. And since the loophole is currently open, the other major mayoral candidates are raking in multiple contributions from single corporate entities through that loophole. I am choosing to abide by the law before it goes into effect because it is a good, important law, and leaders should lead by example.

I believe, though, corporate contributors will not have as much direct influence after this election, once the law does go into effect and as long as there is strong oversight and enforcement. Officially closing this loophole will go a long way toward taking away the grossly over-the-top influence of some contributors who currently skirt campaign finance limits through their LLCs. So my general feeling is I would rather have influence controlled with strong campaign finance laws than by burdening the taxpayers with public-financed campaigns. But I would be open to further discussion.

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

This is an interesting question for me as I am currently in an election where someone may win by plurality not majority. I have been mostly satisfied with this system as I have felt a run-off type of arrangement just creates an artificial mandate. However I am beginning to see some merit to a run-off system as I've witnessed in recent elections that both voters and the media often narrow the choices to a run-off prematurely.

For instance, in the primary in April, we that saw many voters cast their ballot based on who they thought could beat another candidate versus who they wanted to win. It may be preferable for voters to make a genuine choice, while the media focuses on a fuller field, and then have an official run-off if there is no majority decision. Thus, I would be open to considering a top-two run-off system, especially if it helps voter engagement, but am not ready to make a commitment.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

6. Large numbers of properties financed under the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program have exceeded their 15 year mandate to remain affordable. What is your plan to ensure that these properties, and more nearing the sunset, remain affordable?

In 2007, I voted for inclusionary zoning, which requires developers of large new residential buildings to set aside 8% to 10% of the units for low- to moderate-income households for rent or ownership at below market rates. So while more inclusionary zoning projects are underway, I believe we are continually replenishing the supply of affordable housing in the market – particularly since some units are nearing the sunset. We also need to make sure the set-aside units are actually affordable for those who need them, especially since housing prices in the District are higher than before the recession.

Currently, the income eligibility for inclusionary zoning set-asides are 50% to 80% of the area mean income (AMI). As the DC Tenant Advocacy Coalition (TENAC) points out, the area median income includes averages of the surrounding suburbs, which are among the most affluent in the country. The AMI for the Washington metropolitan area for a family of four is \$107,000, but in the District of Columbia, the median income is only \$88,000 for a family of four—the logic is unsound and puts District residents at a disadvantage. Therefore, I would work toward aligning eligibility requirements to actual District figures, making the affordable housing within inclusionary zoning truly affordable for many DC residents.

I would also work to increase the set-asides through methods such as increased density bonuses as well as possible tax incentives for cooperative housing developers. Those developers will be held accountable to deliver on affordable housing, and I will push for legislation that makes development contracts subject to severe fines for non-delivery of agreed-upon affordable housing. ‘

A goal of inclusionary zoning is not just to provide affordable rentals, but to increase affordable home ownership. Long-Term Affordable Homeownership (LTAH) programs offer ownership opportunities for low- to moderate-income households and are designed to keep those units affordable in perpetuity. Through LTAHs, the District government could subsidize home ownership (investing public funds to reduce the purchase price of a home) and in return for the assistance, homebuyers would agree to certain limitations to preserve the affordability for future low- and moderate-income homebuyers, most typically a restriction on the price for which they can sell the property. Among LTAH programs, I believe that Limited Equity Housing Cooperatives (LEHCs) offer the most promise. What makes LEHCs unique among these types of programs is that the District could also provide pre-purchase and post-purchase education, financial counseling, and additional services to promote the success of the homeowners. Wraparound services like these not only minimize the financial risk to the District of Columbia but also ensure the financial security of the homebuyers.

7. More than 60% of DC residents rent their homes. Given the ever-increasing demand for, and ever-decreasing stock of affordable units, are our rent control laws adequate? If not, what would you change?

I believe that we need to take additional steps to stimulate the development of more rental units through incentives, such as tax credits and/or abatements. Giving developers more economic encouragement to build rentals should help boost supply. Having more units on the market usually causes more competitive rates for renting, which also makes it a worthy goal. I am also aware that there are complaints about the CPI +2% increase for rent controlled units, especially since, according to the TENAC, when compounded, that +2% will almost triple current rents in 20 years. I will consider this issue while recognizing that a balance must be struck in order to still stimulate development of more rental units.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

8. The [percentage of children in traditional public schools](#) has declined dramatically, 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 address this trend?

First and foremost, we must continue to improve the traditional public schools. And we must narrow the dramatic achievement gap. Those actions will certainly reverse the decline.

While it is concerning that enrollment in traditional public schools has declined so dramatically, there is good news to report: At the beginning of the 2014/15 school year, DC Public Schools saw its highest enrollment on the first day of school in five years, welcoming more than 2,000 more students than the start of the school year in 2013. Moreover, the number of applications received by the DC Public Charter School Board seems to have leveled off, indicating that the District may have reached a saturation point for new charter schools.

I believe the innovation and independence of charter schools, and the competition they provide, have been helpful to our educational system, although I did not support them initially. As you may recall, they were foisted upon DC by Congress in 1995. And they are obviously here to stay.

Yet as charter school enrollment approaches 50%, we must also think about how charter schools and traditional public schools can better cooperate as part of a shared system. This should take the shape of better planning between the two and more sharing of best practices, with the ultimate goal of strengthening both systems.

Coordination is virtually non-existent between charter schools and DCPS. We saw this recently when a science-focused charter school, Harmony School of Excellence-DC, was placed adjacent to a science-focused public school, Langleigh Elementary. I believe it would be much better to put a new science-focused charter school in an area of the city not now served by one.

I recognize that the notion of increased cooperation will face resistance from charter schools who rely on independence from government, but I believe that we can preserve autonomy while having the

cooperation necessary to serve all students without costly duplication.

In addition, there is more opportunity for charter and traditional schools to learn from each other. Sam Chaltain, in his book *Our School: Searching for Community in the Era of Choice* examined an older traditional public school and a new, innovative charter school. He points out that each has strengths the other does not. It's time to better harness the experience of each: the institutionalized practice of public schools and the experimentation of charter schools, and have them share best practices to lift all students in the system.

I would also like to see increased oversight of charter schools. We've recently seen several cases of misappropriation of schools funds by charter school managers. We need increased transparency of the finances relating to charter schools and the other business engagements of charter school operators to ensure that our public tax dollars are not being wasted and abused.

In the end, our goals are the same for both traditional and charter schools: to provide equal opportunity for every child, no matter what part of the city they live in. We're all in this together and we're all spending our taxpayer's hard-earned money. So we have to do it right in a coordinated, transparent, and cost-efficient way.

9. What changes, if any, would you propose to the system of mayoral control of DC's public schools? Is there a need for greater accountability in our schools?

First of all, I did not vote for the takeover and was only one of two who did not. I did not support the mayoral takeover because with such little democracy, I could not bring myself to get rid of our elected Board of Education, thus ridding ourselves of nearly a third of our elected positions. At the same time, I have always advocated for reform in our schools, including instituting longer instructional time and strengthening teacher evaluations while I was on the Board of Education in the 1970s. I think reform was needed in 2007 with or without a takeover. But today I would keep what we have, which includes an elected Board due to my efforts, for stability and continued improvement.

The mayoral takeover of DCPS, which began in 2007, has had some rocky moments. Under the current Chancellor, there have been improvements in terms of working with the community and with educators. I am also glad that reform brought greater accountability via stronger evaluations of teachers and other school personnel. However, I would consider reviewing how the tests are being used and/or to ensure DCPS personnel are fairly evaluated and we measure educational approaches that have the greatest positive impact on our children.

I am certainly not against standardized testing. When I was elected to the Board of Education 40 years ago, there were no standardized tests and I fought to bring them back as I believed that we had to know how our students were measuring up compared to other students around the country. So although I believe that standardized tests are crucial benchmarks for progress, I never thought that they should be the end-all and be-all of instruction and learning. We must not emphasize them so much that they stifle both teachers' and students' creativity.

A *Washington Post* article from September 2, 2014 highlighted the approach Fairfax County, the 10<sup>th</sup> most populous school district in the nation, is taking, an approach that I intend to consider. It's called "Portrait of a Graduate," a set of attributes each graduate of that system should possess. Superintendent Karen Garza calls it "a long-range strategic plan ... that will lessen the focus on standardized, high stakes testing." As Fairfax School Board Member Janie Strauss explains in the article "We all know we

are in an era where it is not what you know but what you can do with what you know. ... The content part of curriculum remains important but if we stop there, we've short-changed our children." I agree and will work hard with the Chancellor to achieve a more balanced approach.

I was also glad to see the Chancellor's decision to delay inclusion of test scores in teacher evaluations until the 2015-16 school year to allow for more time for the transition to the Common Core standards. I agree it would be unfair to force teachers to be evaluated prematurely on the new Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test, which aligns with Common Core.

In spite of many areas where I agree with the approach, I do believe there is a need for greater accountability in our schools—both traditional and charter.

## EAST OF THE RIVER

10. With respect to development at the St. Elizabeth's Hospital campus, what would you do to protect the interests and maximize the benefits to those living east of the Anacostia River? How would you ensure that Anacostia's longtime residents can continue to afford to remain in this redeveloped community?

I have always believed that government has a responsibility to take care of people and business in equal measure. With the city currently experiencing so much growth, there is no reason that we shouldn't be able to take better care of our most capital- and amenities- starved neighborhoods. While the redevelopment of St. Elizabeth's is not mixed-use in that it does not include a housing component, bringing so many jobs back to the neighborhood will undoubtedly have an impact, and we must make sure that this revitalized community does not have the unintended effect of raising property values so much as to push long-time residents out. As Mayor I would look for ways to increase the number of public housing set-asides in the area immediately surrounding the St. Elizabeth's campus. And for future redevelopment projects that may begin during my administration, I would work to ensure that all contracts include a guaranteed public housing component as well as stipulations that services for the community, such as grocery stores, are part of the plan.

## PLANNING

11. With a number of development projects (e.g. McMillan Park) generating controversy around the city, how would you direct DC agencies to revise the way the city makes decisions about public investments, and, more broadly, how and where to undertake these projects?

Certainly, any redevelopment is going to create controversy, so it is imperative that the Office of the Mayor, as well as all agencies that are stakeholders in redevelopment not only adopt a certain sensitivity when dealing with the individuals impacted by change, but also help communicate the positive effects of that change.

What attracted me to Washington, DC nearly 40 years ago was its beauty – including its incomparable architecture. In order to protect that legacy, I would have Office of Planning and Economic Development support and give preference to projects that preserve our city's beauty through

preservation of historical architecture, or at the very least construction of architecture that is complimentary to, and aesthetically pleasing alongside existing structures. I would also favor projects that maximize green space. And most importantly, I would favor the projects that add the greatest value to the lives of the residents most directly impacted by the development, including assurances of long-term affordable housing options so that the residents are not priced out once the redevelopment is complete. I would also want any development to include the amenities that some communities have lots of and other community have none of, such as grocery stores, coffee shops, dry cleaners etc. .

## ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

12. According to the District Department of the Environment, DC today gets 12% of its energy from renewable sources, with a goal of reaching 50% by 2032. What goals and plans, if any, do you have to increase DC's use of renewable energy?

I have always been keyed-in on environmental issues, and my record reflects that. Of particular note, while on the Council, I created the Department of the Environment and shepherded passage of the strongest tree law in the nation.

I am committed to do what I can to help DC meet – or even succeed – the goal deriving at least 50% of our energy from renewable sources. While the DC Department of the Environment is currently promoting and helping homeowners with information to help them convert their homes to solar, I would see what incentives I could put into place to assist homeowners and businesses convert more of their energy needs to solar sources.

In situations where the upfront costs of solar conversion are too much to bear for homeowners of lesser means, I would see if the District could provide additional tax breaks and/or rebates for these homeowners. And I would work to retro-fit all District properties, from the Wilson Building, to public housing, so that they could derive some or all of their power from the sun. Additionally, I would look into the feasibility of placing panels atop DC's 71,000 streetlights to make them largely self-generating.

Separately, we should look at converting, as soon as is practicable, as many of the District's automotive fleet as well as Metro's bus fleet to either renewable biofuels, or hybrids. And as electric-powered vehicles become more affordable and have longer range, they can be used to replace the aging fleet of biofuel vehicles.