

DC for Democracy Shadow) Questionnaire U.S. Senator (Shadow)

1. What in your background and experience qualifies you to serve in this office?

For over 50 years I have been an activist working for peace, civil and human rights. At the age of 19 I participated in the historic March on Washington, August 28, 1963. DC Statehood is the yet unrealized goal of this historic civil and human rights agenda. I have testified several times a year for over a decade to the Council on issues comprising this agenda. I slept in a tent in Thomas Circle protesting the gutting of the safety net by the Control Board and participated in countless demonstrations in defense of our low-income and working class community. My three arrests for civil disobedience in defense of human and environmental rights prepare me to help lead a massive campaign of resistance to our colonial status in collaboration with our advocates for DC Statehood.

2. What particular skills do you bring to the job that would complement those currently or previously serving in this position?

As an experienced researcher, a candidate for DC office since 1998, and participant in the struggles for economic, social and environmental human rights in DC I bring a wealth of experience to this position. My record is documented at http://davidschwartzman.com/My_biography_2014. I am a friend of Senator Michael Brown and look forward to work closely with him and other elected members of our Statehood Delegation.

3. What motivates you to want to serve in this office?

I am committed to see DC Statehood becoming a reality in my lifetime; I am 70 years old, and my patience is wearing thin! The synergies necessary to achieve this goal will in themselves lay the basis for the most progressive and just state in the nation. In my view “Douglass” is better than “New Columbia”, but I support a bottom-up process to name our state.

4. What have you done to date to promote statehood for the people of the District of Columbia?

I have been a member of the DC Statehood (Green) Party for 38 years. On June 5, 2008 I testified on behalf of the DCSGP at the Town Hall Meeting with Mr. Doudou Diene, UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, presenting our Petition for D.C. Statehood and Human Rights, with nearly 2000 signatures. On July 13, 2009, I led a delegation of prominent DC Statehood advocates in a meeting with Eleanor Holmes Norton, urging her to introduce a bill for DC Statehood, a goal achieved with the introduction of the New Columbia Admissions Act in the House. I was the Initiator and Co-editor of the Report on State of Human Rights in DC (American Friends Service Committee, <http://afsc.org/resource/report-state-human-rights-dc>) which assessed the human rights record of our local and federal governments since DC self-declared itself as a Human

Rights City, on December 10, 2008, the first U.S. city to do so. I represent our Party in the DC Statehood Coalition (<http://www.newcolumbiavision.org/>) and have been active in lobbying for the New Columbia Admissions Act in Congress. I submitted testimony on the New Columbia Admissions Act, S. 132 to the Senate on Tuesday, September 30, 2014 (<http://greenpapers.net/dc-statehood-now/>). Eugene Puryear and I initiated a National Call-in Day for DC Statehood on October 6, 2014, with a press conference in front of the White House (<http://www.gp.org/current-news/1137-dc-statehood-green-press-conference-for-dc-statehood-oc-t-6-near-white-house-calls-to-congress-urged>; see our letter to President Obama).

5. If elected, what would you propose to do in the short term to build momentum for the movement for statehood?

By “short term”, I take as the next four years. Until an energized mass movement emerges locally, we will not likely reach the political tipping point for DC Statehood. Therefore I will work to:

1) Create a grassroots mass movement of our own residents, supported with solidarity from our region, by first convening DC-wide Town Halls to bring together activists and residents to map out an action program to achieve DC Statehood as well as working for a Moral Monday in DC, putting DC Statehood front and center of a human rights movement for political, economic, social and environmental human rights, in particular, realization of a \$15/hour minimum wage and the effective transition of our Returning Citizens to living wage employment, including the sealing of the records of non-violent victims of the drug war;

2) Build support in the House and Senate for the New Columbia Admissions Act by expanding the DC Statehood Coalition lobby, as well as promoting the creation of a national membership organization “Americans for DC Statehood” with affiliates in every state;

3) Energize the more than 200,000 members of the Green Party of the United States which has long supported DC Statehood in its Platform, unlike the national Democratic and Republican Parties, as well as the Global Greens, to support DC Statehood nationally and internationally, building the broadest coalition across political lines;

4) Establish a publicly owned and accountable DC bank that would deposit District tax dollars, instead of Wall Street being the recipient, and in partnership with local financial institutions, promote jobs, sustainable local businesses and affordable housing (for more information go to the non-partisan DC Public Banking Center at <http://dcpublicbanking.org>; I am on the Steering Committee);

5) Embarrass the U.S. government in the court of world public opinion, as the only nation with democratic elections which continues to deny the same rights to citizens living in its capital as

those enjoyed by all other citizens. As a member of the International Committee of the Green Party of the United States I will push this agenda.

6. Does the Shadow Delegation have any responsibility to educate those outside the District as to why they should support statehood for the District? If so, how would you propose to do so?

Of course. An energized local mass movement for DC Statehood is necessary to be taken seriously by the American public and therefore Congress, to achieve our goal of DC Statehood. I will of course collaborate with other members of the DC Statehood Delegation in building support in the House and Senate for the New Columbia Admissions Act, as well as promoting the creation of a national membership organization "Americans for DC Statehood" with affiliates in every state. Getting DC residents with relatives in the 50 states involved is critical. Finally, as an elected member of the DC Statehood Green Party, an affiliate of the Green Party of the United States, I will work to energize the more than 200,000 members of the Green Party of the United States which has long supported DC Statehood in collaboration with each state Green Party. Our Party has reenergized this collaboration with a National Call-in Day for DC Statehood on October 6, 2014

(<http://www.gp.org/current-news/1137-dc-statehood-green-press-conference-for-dc-statehood-oct-6-near-white-house-calls-to-congress-urged>). Finally, we need to set an example to surrounding jurisdictions by pushing the limits of Home Rule. For example, implementing a just budget and a fair progressive DC tax structure will be a model for the region, thereby empowering the Statehood movement, laying the basis for a progressive reciprocal income tax structure with surrounding jurisdictions. With such an approach we will surely win many allies among Maryland and Virginia commuters who now 70% of our workforce.

7. The Shadow Delegation receives no pay and controls very limited resources currently. How would you propose to operate under these circumstances?

I served 39 years as an environmental scientist teaching on the Howard University faculty, now Professor Emeritus. As an elected Senator I will work full-time for DC Statehood without compensation (I am retired with a pension).

8. What, if anything, would you propose to do about the current budget for the Shadow Delegation?

Aside from office space in the Wilson Building there is no current budget. An adequate budget for the Statehood Delegation is imperative to have the capacity for more effective outreach to the local, national and international communities. I will of course lobby our really local elected government to finally fund this budget, and bring this issue to the residents of DC. Nevertheless,

a strong united mass movement will generate the momentum necessary to make possible the goal of DC Statehood.

9. What strategy or strategies do you believe offer the greatest chance of success in the fight for statehood?

Our U.S. Senator is charged with working for full self-determination of our residents, DC Statehood. Only Statehood will deliver full voting rights with permanent budgetary and legislative autonomy, the full right to self-government, with the same rights as citizens have in the 50 states. We must organize locally, nationally, internationally for DC Statehood.

Home Rule is a Colonial Shackle binding us all. Julius Hobson Sr., a founder of the Statehood Party, wisely called Home Rule "Home Fool", recognizing its colonial status. But we break a shackle by pushing against it until it shatters. We push against the shackle of Home Rule by energizing a mass movement demanding our local elected government pass legislation and fund our budget which delivers economic, social and environmental justice to our residents, and dare Congress to repeal any of it! When the Shackle of Home Rule breaks, the goal of DC Statehood will be achieved much sooner than the pundits in the press tell us what is possible.

Learning from the example of the Moral Monday movement in the South, under the leadership of Rev. William Barber is very important. This movement began in 2013 and has now gained broad and deep support. It is now spreading to the North, for example, in Indiana. A Moral Monday in DC was launched last April. The Moral Monday movement puts the ethical imperatives front and center. DC Statehood in the context of a multifaceted human rights agenda should be our Moral Monday. Building this movement, with DC Statehood a central demand, will get national attention, highlight our lack democratic equality and promote support for our goal from the Moral Monday movements in other states.