

1. What in your background qualifies and prepares you to serve as the first elected attorney general of the District of Columbia?

I have 30 years of trial and appellate experience in Superior Court, federal court, and the trial and appeals courts of Maryland and Virginia. I tried cases in every division of the courthouse, including criminal, civil, juvenile, family, traffic, special proceedings and probate, with notable successes. I am familiar with court practices and procedures, the judges and other court personnel, scheduling and rules of procedure. I have a long record of trial and appellate successes the fields of voting rights, criminal law, fair wages, constitutional law and federal statutory interpretation.

2. Given the general belief, in the District and elsewhere, that the political system is corrupt, does the attorney general have a special role and responsibility to help transform the legal and political culture of the District? If so, how would you go about doing that?

The Attorney General represents the people of the District of Columbia. The independently-elected AG does have a special role and responsibility to help transform the legal and political culture of the District as they are tasked with holding our elected officials and government agencies accountable to the people.

As Attorney General, I will review laws we have on the books, such as those concerning affordable housing, to ensure developers receiving government funds to provide affordable housing units are doing so. Additionally, I will enforce the new campaign finance laws taking effect in 2015 but I will lobby the Council to pass public campaign finance laws to level the playing field so special interests are not involve in our political process.

3. The Council has adopted a number of ethics provisions that apply government-wide. Are those provisions sufficient to address corruption and ensure good government? If not, what additional provisions do you consider important to build on those already adopted? Will additional resources be needed either in the Office of the Attorney General or elsewhere?

The current ethics provisions have not been sufficiently enforced, and new rules and laws are necessary. Campaign finance, contracting, small business programs, and constituent service funds are some the most serious examples of conflicts of interest. I will urge that new funding be provided for additional anti-corruption initiatives, but I am prepared to work within the current budget to assure that our current laws and existing ethical rules are followed.

4. Previously, agency legal counsel have reported to the attorney general. Effective October 1, they report to the Office of the Mayor. How do you feel about this recent decision of the Mayor and Council to change the way in which agency counsel report? Do you think it is appropriate? Should the matter be revisited sometime after a new elected attorney general takes office?

I do not support the reassignment of AG lawyers to the agencies and hope that the Council will reconsider. However, I will work within this new structure to assure that the people's business is carried out competently and capably within the framework now in place.

I will work closely with the new Mayor to assure that mechanisms are in place which foster communication and collaboration between OAG and the client agencies. I will workshop the changes, to gather ideas and promote cooperation. I will keep the lines of communication open and am committed to do my utmost to see that the new structure is successful.

5. What are the strongest legal arguments against the New Columbia Admission Act, and how would you rebut those arguments?

The New Columbia Admissions Act would create the new State of New Columbia, on equal footing with the 50 other states – a position long supported by Paul Zuckerberg. Opponents raise two arguments against the Act. First, it is unconstitutional to reduce the size of the District of Columbia, and second, New Columbia would not have sufficient income to afford to be a state.

In fact, the constitution only sets the maximum size of the District (10 square miles) not a minimum size, and Congress has the authority to reduce and define its borders, as it has done in the past. Second, the District no longer relies upon the federal government for its fiscal survival. With the growth and expansion of local businesses and population, DC's payment from the federal government is on par with other states.

6. What would be your top three priorities as attorney general?

As Attorney General, my top priorities include juvenile justice reform, improving departmental efficiencies, and implementing community outreach initiatives. In reforming our juvenile justice system I will collaborate with other DC Government agencies such as DCPS, DC Health Services, MPD and other to ensure we are not continuing the school-to-prison pipeline. Where possible, I want to provide alternatives to improve the lives troubled youth.

In improving departmental efficiencies I will review our internal structures to make sure our budget is being allocated to the most important goals, and review current case loads to ensure that the most important cases are being pursued.

I plan to work with ANCs to engage the community to ensure we have open lines of communication with DC residents to better understand each neighborhood, especially when dealing with consumer protection issues.