



2015 Ward 4 Special Election Questionnaire

Bobvala Tengen

Tengen for D.C.

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1. PUBLIC FINANCING

A number of jurisdictions provide public financing to political campaigns who meet certain requirements. The campaign must receive small donations (as low as \$5 per person) from a specified minimum number of individuals. In addition, candidates must agree to certain conditions (for example, limits on how much their campaign may spend, limits on how much any individual may donate, and a ban on contributions from corporations and political action committees).

As a Councilmember would you vote to establish such a system in DC? Why or why not?

I would support public financing for candidates in a Rank Choice Voting system where candidates who are ranked become eligible to receive public financing. This ideal system would be best executed during primary and general elections.

2. BANNING PAY TO PLAY

In the current Council period, Chairman Mendelson has introduced the *Contractor Pay-to-Play Elimination Amendment Act of 2015*. Instead of using the conventional approach of banning contractors from donating to campaigns, the bill would ban donors from receiving government contracts.

2a) As a Councilmember, will you vote in favor of this legislation?

I would vote in favor of this legislation because donating to campaigns while also wanting to pursue government contracts can create the appearance of a conflict of interest.

2b) What have you done in the past to limit the influence of monied interests in DC government?

I have not directly influenced monied interests in DC government, but I will take proactive steps to advance legislation to ensure that we have strong contracting and procurement process that is equitable and unbiased.



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3. STATEHOOD

When it comes to statehood, politicians and public officials are often long on rhetoric and nearly absent when it comes to doing the work required.

What is the most significant action you have taken to promote the cause of statehood, and how do you plan to advance the cause as Councilmember?

I plan to advance the cause of DC statehood by building relationships with members of Congress and bringing awareness to the nation about the lack of voting rights for DC residents.

4. HOUSING

Mayor Bowser has committed to adding \$100 million to the Housing Production Trust Fund in this year's budget.

4a) Do you stand with the Mayor in her commitment?

I support the mayor in her commitment but I would also want to ensure there is adequate funding to support this trust fund. The Housing Production Trust Fund is currently funded by real estate recordation and transfer taxes on a percentage basis. The DC Fiscal Policy Institute has made recommendations that would provide for more stable funding, which is a more viable solution. The district should continue to allocate money from the recordation and transfer taxes. This should be a set amount of funding that would treat the Housing production trust fund as government agency and allocate funding from the general fund. This combination would guarantee that the fund is funded on an annual basis.

4b) Are there any circumstances under which you would vote for a budget that does *not* include the additional \$100 million? If so, please be specific.

There would need to be an assessment to determine why this matter would not be included in the budget. If there was adequate affordable housing for all residents, there could be a proposed reduction of this trust fund that is proportionate to the current need.



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5. POLICE

The DCFerguson movement was formed to oppose invasive police tactics, particularly jumpouts, targeted to communities of color. DCFerguson demands that the DC Council pass a resolution taking a stand against the use of jumpout squads. See the DCFerguson petition for details: <https://www.change.org/p/councilmember-phil-mendelson-take-a-stand-against-jump-out-squads-in-washington-d-c>

5a) Have you signed the petition linked above? If not, please explain.

Yes, I have signed the petition to support the decrease in police profiling in the District.

5b) Would you support the Council holding a public roundtable on jumpouts?

Yes, I would support the Council holding a public roundtable on jumpouts to include members of the community, civil rights activists, police officers, lawmakers and other stakeholders.

6. JOBS

What have you done specifically to help create good jobs with good benefits for Ward 4 residents? If elected, will you introduce/co-sponsor legislation such as [San Francisco's "Retail Workers Bill of Rights"](#) to give workers greater control over their schedules and promote worker education and training?

As a former employee of J. Crew and Abercrombie & Fitch, I understand the concerns of retail workers and would support similar legislation. The combination of legislation like that of San Francisco and a living wage would finally give retail employees in the District an opportunity to pursue higher education and afford to live in our great city.



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7. INCOME INEQUALITY

While income inequality is far more than just a local issue, Washington has been ranked fourth highest among major cities in the country in the size of the income gap between upper and lower income residents. Do you think this broad income disparity is an issue the Council can and should address? If so, why, and what specific proposals/steps do you think should be considered? If not, why?

I think the Council can address these issues with a strong workforce development program as a priority for low-income residents to help them build the skills for gainful employment. In addition, we can strengthen the education system to prepare residents for vocational training and/or higher learning opportunities. Strengthening programs like the DCHR resident for hire program and conducting a performance audit of DOES to ensure the agency is meeting its goals and serving the needs of low-income residents.

8. DISPLACEMENT

What specific strategies would you endorse as a Councilmember to prevent displacement of residents and businesses in Ward 4 neighborhoods (like 16th Street Heights and Petworth) that are presently experiencing development pressure?

For Ward 4 residents, we can create a tax zone where we monitor the increase in property tax for individuals who live around Ward 4 developments to ensure there isn't an insurmountable increase of taxes. We would leverage DOPA for any multi-family property owners who would want to sell their properties within the target zone. Also, we could use existing programs for small businesses to assist with performing façade and infrastructure improvements that will uplift the businesses to thrive in the new development.