

## DC FOR DEMOCRACY

### 2015 WARD 4 SPECIAL ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

#### RENEE BOWSER'S RESPONSES

1. I agree with and would vote to establish a system of public financing because public financing places all candidates on an equal playing field as regards funding of their campaigns. A system of public financing lets voters know that even though they may not have big dollar amounts to give their contributions will make a difference, and may encourage greater participation because voters will believe their input can make a real difference. Public financing allows the candidates' records and ideas to take the lead.
  
2.
  - a. I will vote in favor of banning donors from receiving government contracts.
  
  - b. I have maintained a policy of not taking corporate and developer contributions in the elections in which I've participated because I do not believe they should continue to yield outsized influence. In past elections, I consistently spoke out against exploiting of the loophole in DC law which allowed shell limited liability corporations to exceed the campaign contribution limits in DC campaigns.
  
3. I have advocated for statehood for many years by testifying before DC Council and explaining that statehood for DC can be achieved by a majority vote in Congress in the same way that other U.S. territories have become states. Additionally, I have marched for statehood and promoted statehood as a campaign issue as a candidate for DC Council.

As a Councilmember, I would use my office as a bully pulpit to educate senators and Congress members on how DC's lack of statehood hinders our progress on certain issues, including how it retarded our progress on health issues during the period that Congress denied DC use of its own funds for needle exchange and how having DC prisoners sent all over the U.S. hinders rehabilitation and family unity. I would make sure to respond to meddlesome Congress members and highlight what they could be addressing in their own districts.

- 4.

- a. Given the housing crisis in Ward 4 and DC as a whole, the Housing Production Trust Fund must be funded with a minimum of \$200 million annually in order to build and rehabilitate sufficient affordable housing to help stem the housing crisis. So I stand with the Mayor; however, I believe more than \$100 million is needed.
  - b. No, I will not vote for a budget which does not include a minimum of \$100 million because I will fight for \$200 million. We must have an annual dedicated stream of adequate funding to realistically stem the housing crisis along with increased funding of the Local Rent Supplement Program which provides vouchers and construction funding.
  
5.
  - a. I signed the petition because I believe the practice must be ended, as it violates civil rights, causes more danger to individuals and neighborhoods as well as police, and erodes trust in law enforcement and makes everyone less safe.
  - b. I would support a public roundtable on jump outs. I will also promote systematic reporting of stop and frisk data and alignment of documentation requirements for officers with national best practices in transparency and accountability.
  
6. I am an Assistant General Counsel for United Food and Commercial Workers International Union who has fought on behalf of workers for many years to have a voice on the job and good wages, benefits, and working conditions. I have stood on picket lines to advocate for better wages and working conditions. As a member of Ward 4 Thrives, I fought to educate Ward 4 residents about Walmart, pressure Walmart to raise wages and working conditions, and attempted to persuade the DC government to consider the needs of neighborhood small businesses which since Walmart's entry on Georgia Avenue, NW have loss 25% of their revenue.

I have been advocating throughout my campaign and will introduce and support legislation to require chain restaurants and retail stores to offer more hours to part-time workers before adding new part-time workers. Additionally, I will introduce and support legislation that requires employers to provide adequate notice to workers in making schedules and changing schedules so that workers are able to schedule taking their

children to and from child care and school, scheduling supplemental employment, and scheduling schooling to better support for their families and careers.

7. I believe Council should address income inequality because the gross inequality is making DC unlivable for working class people. DC needs to make its income tax system more progressive by lowering taxes for residents who make \$50,000 or less adjusted gross income and raising taxes for those who make over \$500,000 adjusted gross income. The Council should fund the property tax exemption for seniors age 70 or older of modest income who have owned their homes for 20 years or more. DC should repeal the raise in the estate exemption passed in 2014 and return to an exemption of \$1 million.
  
8. I would fast track various affordable housing measures to ensure that low and middle income families can afford to live in Ward 4. These include strengthening rent control by repealing the 2% annual surcharge (over annual CPI increases) charged on rent control apartments and closing loopholes in voluntary agreements which are virtually eliminating rent control in certain buildings. I also believe we need to require developers to build more affordable units in return for the massive subsidies DC provides many developers.

I would help small businesses with economic development by introducing legislation to provide up-front grants or very low interest loans to small business getting started if (1) independent study shows that the business can succeed; (2) the business owner presents a viable business model for the intended business; and (3) the business agrees to hire and retain DC residents. Current Great Street grants are reimbursable and therefore many small businesses are unable to fund their businesses and await reimbursement.

March 16, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

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April 28, 2015 Special Election  
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