



2015 Ward 8 Special Election Questionnaire
Sheila Bunn

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?

In general, I am supportive of publicly financed campaigns. I would vote to establish such a system in DC if it were well planned and the appropriate funding source identified. I believe publicly financed campaigns can combat elections being dominated by bundlers, big donors, secret contributions and the like. That kind of campaign action can lead to scandal and corruption, and furthermore, cause an extremely uneven playing field among candidates. Oftentimes, we see candidates become indebted to special-interest influence rather than be beholden to the people they were elected to serve.

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 am generally supportive of the goals reflected in this bill but have a few concerns regarding the specifics. Although the Gray Administration supported the intent of this bill when Chairman Mendelson introduced it in 2014, we believed that there were several substantive changes that needed to be made to the bill. I would like to review the current bill to ascertain whether or not those concerns have been addressed.

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

I strongly support limits on government contractors' ability to influence the awarding of government contracts. As a senior leader in the Gray Administration, I worked with Mayor Gray and the then Attorney General to propose legislation that would ban the practice of "pay-to-play" politics. The reform package sought to curb political donations from anyone with a city contract of \$250,000 or more, prohibit lobbyists from bundling contributions, and ban corporations from donating through various linked entities. Further, it would have required that all campaign donations within 30 days of an election be disclosed within 24 hours.

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.



2015 Ward 8 Special Election Questionnaire

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?

My 19 years of public service to Ward 8 and the District include 16 years working with Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton. During my tenure, I worked with the Congresswoman to introduce legislation for DC Statehood and budget and legislative autonomy and securing support for those bills. I also helped to coordinate and participated in “DC Freedom Summer”, a partnership with DC Vote, where volunteers on the National Mall educated tourists and other passersby on the District’s lack of Statehood and voting representation.

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?

Yes.

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.

The only instance that I would vote for a budget that does not include the additional \$100 million is if our current or expected expenditures were more than the District’s revenue at the time. For that reason, I believe it’s important for the District to identify a dedicated funding stream for the Housing Production Trust Fund so that its funding won’t be subject to the whim of economic downturns.

5. POLICE

The DCFerguson movement was formed to oppose invasive police tactics, particularly jump outs, targeted to communities of color. DCFerguson demands that the DC Council pass a resolution taking a stand against the use of jump out 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.

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

Yes.

6. JOBS

What have you done specifically to help create good jobs with good benefits for Ward 8 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 senior leader in the Gray Administration, I am proud of our work to put residents to work and to help underemployed residents obtain better jobs. Through the One City, One Hire



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program, we placed more than 10,000 District residents in jobs through partnerships with over 1,100 District employers. The large majority of those residents reside in Wards 5, 7 and 8. We also increased the District's minimum wage to \$9.50 an hour with additional \$1 increases per year until it reaches \$11.50 in 2016.

Yes. Unpredictable scheduling practices create insecurity and instability for workers and their families. Many retail workers cannot predict their hours or pay from day to day or week to week, are unable to make time for schooling or to care for their children or family, secure a second job, or qualify for promotions to full-time employment. Worse, retail workers also face unreasonable schedules with mere hours between scheduled shifts. I believe that companies should give their employees what's fair and what they need to make a living.

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?

Yes. The DC Council has the authority to affect the wages of District workers. For instance, one area where the Council could help to decrease income inequality is by increasing the wages for tipped workers. This could be done by either raising the minimum wage for tipped workers to the full minimum wage as it is for other District workers or, to a specified percentage of the minimum wage.

8. DISPLACEMENT

Sanford Capital is seeking permission to demolish properties by the Congress Heights Metro and replace them with luxury apartments. The tenants have organized the Alabama Avenue/ 13th Street Tenants Coalition to buy the properties and form a housing cooperative. What have you done to date to help the tenants, and how will you help them if elected Councilmember?

I have attended various community meetings to listen to the residents' concerns. If elected, I would work with the residents to exercise their TOPA rights and work with the appropriate District agencies and other entities to ensure that there is transparent and open dialogue between the tenants and property owner, and that the tenants have the appropriate supports to purchase the property.