



2015 Ward 8 Special Election Questionnaire
Stuart Anderson

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?

Yes. Especially in Ward 8, many voters can only afford to donate very small amounts to a campaign. Without public financing to supplement the donations of these individuals, those who can donate much, much more money will dominate the election and, then, dominate decision making by public officials who are willing to trade their votes for big money support in future campaigns. Thus such a system would give people with limited financial resources some leverage, so that they can compete with deep pocket people.

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?

Yes. Many wealthy individuals and organizations donate in order to get government contracts and other favors like grants and tax breaks. Chairman Mendelson's bill will keep people from contributing in order to win favors for themselves and their organizations. We need this! This Bill is a step in the right direction!

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

My campaign is of the people and by the people. In my campaign, I show how other candidates (specifically LaRuby May and Natalie Williams) put the interests of developers, corporations and fat-cat donors ahead of the interests of Ward 8 residents. And, I have stood in the ranks of those protesting against influence of money in campaigns.



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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?

My most recent contribution to Statehood was helping to involve Statehood activists in the 2015 Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Walk and Parade. In my work to promote criminal justice reform, I consistently make the point that the people of DC will be able to control and reform their justice system ONLY after we achieve Statehood. I have in addition, for about 2 years gone to the offices of members of congress in support of the PDA (letter drops, phone calls, and conference calls).

As the Ward 8 Councilmember, I plan to be a part of the mobilization of Ward 8 residents in the Statehood movement. Many of us in Ward 8 have friends and family members in other jurisdictions. I will lead the effort to encourage Ward 8 residents to urge their friends and family members to demand that their elected officials support our Statehood.

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. And my commitment is stronger than Mayor Bowser's. For example, as a Councilmember, Ms. Bowser voted to reduce the Fiscal Year 2015 contribution from \$100 million to \$70 million. I would not have done that. I would urge that it be strengthened by \$50 million, making the total contribution \$150 million.

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.

No. At this time, the DC Government has such strong financial reserves that we can well afford the \$100 million contribution to the Trust Fund. Furthermore, I will fight to protect the Housing Production Trust Fund; and to make sure that its money is used only for housing production. For related expenses, like homelessness services, I will find additional budget dollars rather than syphon money from the Housing Production Trust Fund.

5. POLICE



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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; and, along with my signature, I have added the comment Jumpouts unfairly discriminate against African Americans and Ward 8 residents. It is dehumanizing what they do to people.

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

Yes. I would support the Council roundtable and I have already done so. I attended Chairman McDuffie's March 10 hearing that covered jumpouts — to show my support for those who want the practice stopped.

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?

Yes. Economic advancement has been an important part of my work as the founder of Family and Friends of Incarcerated People (FFOIP). Education is the key to economic advancement. I have worked long and hard to make sure that young people have the resources they need to succeed. For example, for 10 years now, I have started each school year by distributing book-bags and supplies to children whose families could not afford to buy what their children need.

In addition, through my non-profit and in other volunteer work, I have helped Ward 8 residents get and keep good jobs with good benefits. I stood with wage workers; protested against Walmart not signing a workers benefit agreement.

And yes, I will introduce DC's "Retail Workers Bill of Rights." As Ward 8 Councilmember, I will take steps to prevent employers from manipulating work schedules to avoid paying the benefits that the law requires for full-time employees. As Ward 8 Councilmember I will continue my work of assuring opportunities for people to get the education and training they need for their economic security and prosperity.



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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?

Yes. I believe the Council can and should place redistribution policies in place (must address income inequality) not only to benefit of those at the lower end of the income scale, but also to benefit DC society in its entirety. Both the rich and the poor lose quality of life when they live in economic (and largely racial) segregation.

I would reduce income inequality through these steps:

Improving education for children and promoting lifelong learning for adults — to make it possible for many more DC residents to get jobs that already pay at the upper end of the income scale.

Giving many more workers and their families the opportunity to enter the middle class — by raising the minimum wage and by increasing Earned Income Tax Credits.

I support the Fight for Fifteen — raising the minimum wage a little each year until it reaches \$15 an hour (and then adjusting it annually to account for inflation).

Furthermore, I support expanding the program that has now proven successful at the federal level — where hard working people in low paying jobs can get back not only get back all the money their employers withheld for taxes but a little extra money, through the Earned Income Tax Credit. The DC Government should expand this program to allow additional Tax Credits for DC residents who work hard all year but whose salaries doom them and their families to poverty while others live in prosperity.

Finally, I would fight to fund “quality of life” benefits like public parks and swimming pools and free Internet access, so everyone can enjoy the such benefits — without regard to their income levels.

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/



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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 stood side by side with Eugene Puryear to fight on behalf of residents being displaced from their homes on Alabama Avenue and 13th Street. I have called attention to the injustice, and I have advocated for solutions that would allow those tenants to continue to live in their community.

As Councilmember, I will introduce legislation that will enable those who have lived at Alabama Avenue / 13th Street to buy this property. Then they will no longer be tenants; they will be home owners.

How to pay for this? Create a cooperative (controlled by current and former residents of the Alabama Avenue / 13th Street properties). Then, assist that cooperative in redeveloping the property — building homes not only for former and current residents, but also for additional residents. Revenue from additional new residents would, in turn, help make the entire project financially possible.

In Congress Heights, across Ward 8 and in all of DC, we must assure quality housing for everyone who lives in DC today and for those who wish to move here. Without prompt and decisive action by the DC Council, those who wish to move here will use their economic power to drive out many of us who live here already. We cannot, we must not, let this happen.