



2015 Ward 8 Special Election Questionnaire

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?

- A) Yes. In fact I started a petition about controlling the donation process for keeping it democratic and making sure everyday people are donating and influencing the political process not big business.**

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?

- A) I'm not familiar with the entire legislation however this is a crafty way to ensure that we put an end to the pay to play type of politics that have plague DC.**

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

- A) As I have stated before, I started a petition to control some of the influence of monied interest in government, in hopes of having a more representative City Council that addresses the needs of the people, and not the needs of the special interest.**



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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?

A) Statehood is an issue that is very dear to me. I am a strong advocate for Statehood for so many reasons. In fact, I went to jail at the White House for protesting fro DC to receive 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?

A) Yes. I support raising additional revenue for housing, however, DC had a \$417 million dollar surplus in the last fiscal year. It's not that we don't have any money. Rather, it's about prioritizing and better managing what we have. We have to put more money into housing to ensure decent and affordable living quarters for all.

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.

A) No!



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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.

A) Yes. I've participated in a rally with Raphael Brisco where I signed a written petition in person, to support the cause.

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

A) Yes. These are paramilitary tactics and not what people need to address the crime in our communities. We need community policing and not the intimidating illegal practice of "jump outs".

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?

A) I've partnered with Progressive partners and Marriot and was able to get residents jobs at Marriott's Marquis, National Baseball Stadium, as well as Transition healthcare.

B) If elected, I believe that all residents should have the right to schedule time to create more opportunities for themselves via higher learning and additional vocational programs/ institutions.



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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?

- A) Yes, I think there is something everyone can do including the City Council to address this issue of income inequality. I propose better job training and educational opportunities, so the residents can become better prepared for jobs when they apply and advancement wherever they might already be employed.**

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?

- A) First I would lobby my colleagues to get rid of the name affordable housing, because for the everyday person I know, affordable housing is becoming less affordable. DC has an inventory of apartments and properties throughout the district that are vacant, and or underused. I will commission a feasibility study to see what we have and use some of those properties to get homeless residents access to housing. We are wasting millions in hotel fees during the winter months. We can partner with other services to ensure "housing for all".**