



Questionnaire for 2016 General Election
Council Position Sought: At Large
Candidate Name: G. Lee Aikin (DC Statehood Green Party)

1. *Bills now before the DC Council are intended to reduce the influence of big money donors through several approaches:*

- *banning corporate campaign contributions,*
- *keeping donors who make very large contributions from getting government contracts and special tax breaks, and*
- *providing for public financing of political campaigns through a system that matches small donations, similar to what it used in New York City.*

Where do you stand on each of these approaches?

a. The amount allowed for all contributions needs to be seriously reduced, and those from corporations need to be clearly identified. Votin in Council to do this and speaking out for our people to support the Move to Amend is something I will do whenever appropriate. Corporations are not people, and money is not speech.

b. If (a) is done there won't be any very large contributions, open bidding on government contracts should be allowed by all, but special tax breaks like the East Banc deal at 22nd and L Sts. should never be allowed, nor should the NO-BID contract and \$1million annual subsidy to destroy McMillan Park be permitted. Contributions by bidders should be clearly identifiable to all, and the Independent Auditor should remain so.

c. I would certainly want to know a lot more about the New York City matching donations program, as well as others that have been tried. How effective have they been, have people discovered ways to game these system, and how does the general voting population feel about them and their fairness?

2. *The DC Council recently passed a law to gradually raise the DC minimum wage to \$15 by 2020. However, they failed to eliminate the difference between the tipped*

minimum wage, as called for by the ballot initiative that prompted the law. What is your position on the tipped minimum wage?

For many years the minimum wage has been ridiculously low. Efforts are finally succeeding in raising it closer to the level it should have been if increased often to reflect inflation. The tipped minimum wage has also been very low for a long time, and should be raised in fair proportion to its relationship with the minimum wage increase.

Frankly I also think there should be a **maximum wage law**. For example 35 or more years ago the ratio between top CEO pay and low level worker pay in their companies was about 40 to 1. Now it can be as much as 1,000 to 1 and is often 400 to 1. Fifteen dollars x 40 hrs. per week x 52 weeks = \$31,200. That wage times 40 = \$1,248,000. So let's round that out to \$1,250,000 and say that any business that pays their executives more than that cannot deduct the excess salary from their corporate income taxes. This is a complex idea, but that is an example to start us thinking about ways to curb the corporate excess which among other things is robbing Social Security. See: <http://gleeaikin.blogspot.com/2012/10/saving-social-security-wage-cap.html>. Read how corporate wage inflation has destroyed the 90% wage cap that both parties agreed to in 1983, and is now threatening the future of SS benefit payments.

3. Child care on average costs \$21,000 a year for families. What would you do to ensure access for all families? Do you support universal child care?

A few years ago the Walmart funded IFF Report said we should close or repurpose over 40 "underutilized" DC schools, the majority located in Wards 7 and 8. DC government should use some of that excess space to house low or no cost childcare programs. Among the developed countries, only in Switzerland is the cost of childcare a greater percentage of family income, a figure which should shame our country into doing better. For this and other important social programs a slight increase in upper level income taxes would help. California's top rate is 13%. DC's is 8.25%

4. In recent years, DC has lost tens of thousands of units of affordable housing. Over the next few years, we are projected to lose thousands more. How many of these units should the DC government replace or preserve? What steps do you propose to replace and preserve that many units?

The poison of all big development, expensive housing, and gentrification is driving all low and moderate income workers to MD and VA. Our Metro woes show how dangerous Council actions are to continue that trend. Soon few firemen, teachers, police, hotel restaurant, or hospital workers will be available in any emergency.

All builders of big housing should be required to supply a mix of low, moderate, and market rate units to allow workers of all types to live and work near home. Mark-ups of 20% on contracts must stop. DC workers were recently fired for granting a \$6million contract to a distant bidder, rather than a \$13million bid by a local contractor whose former executive is now on our Council. We should continue to reward low bids, even if the bidder is out-of-area, until local bidders learn honesty and make competitive bids.

Our Mayor recently proposed a high priced plan for housing the homeless that rewarded campaign contributors. Immediate negative reaction has forced finding some less expensive alternatives, but more should be found. Low income renters are rightfully hostile at being kicked out before promised housing is built. The Williams administration's New Communities program involving Barry Farms, Park Morton, Northwest One and Lincoln Heights failed to meet it's objectives. What was planned and built is 1/4 market rate, 1/2 moderate income, and only 1/4 low income (less than 400 units). There are 70,000 on waiting lists. For one of my low cost housing ideas see: <http://gleeaikin.blogspot.com/2014/10/can-creative-use-of-shipping-containers.html>

Other fixes include: 1) Stop raising property taxes 10% and more on unimproved homes because some neighbors renovated. 2) Eliminate BBL for owners renting a few units and simplify the D-30 for small owner rentals. 3) Change the one-month Vacant Property law to the one year VP used in nearby counties. This has caused panic selling, by people who are ill or heirs at the worst time of their life, to real estate speculators (who then sit on the building waiting for the market to go up).

5. What actions would you take to enhance public safety and reduce violent crime while reforming racialized policing that unfairly targets people of color?

Violent behavior begins early. Danes and Germans react very differently when children fight on playgrounds. Danish methods could be taught to our parents. We need to hire a new police chief who does not repeat past mistakes and can negotiate effectively with police representatives. Making police sit in cars at high visibility static posts frustrates good officers who want to patrol, hunting for crime and other trouble. Do we need a special unit for rampant auto theft? Regarding recent police killings of people with mental or drug problems, more training to deal with mental illness and intoxication is needed. Perhaps a new Mental Health Unit, like Special Victims, should exist to provide better negotiation and unrushed empathic handling on scene. Police are upset with one small pay raise in 7 years. Long term officers leave early because pensions are based on 3 best earning years. This is not 2008, we can pay more. DC jail could use more funding for counseling, education and treatment of illness and mental health.

6. Good government requires checks and balances between the Council and the Mayor. Which policies do you support that are different from Mayor Bowser's policies? Please be as specific as possible.

The Mayor's Statehood/Constitution effort is a real danger to checks and balances. The current document still limits future Delegates to a smaller number than approved and voted in 1982. It is harder for special interests to influence a larger number than a few Delegates. Her Constitution eliminates the 2 Council member set-aside for non-majority party candidates like Statehood Greens, Republicans, Libertarians or Independents, further limiting independent thought and votes on the Council. Putting the Independent Auditor and Chief Finance Officer, as well as the Attorney General under direct control of the Governor is very dangerous. The Auditor, who questioned the NO-BID contract allowing one contractor to plan destruction of our last big parkland, McMillan, is an example. The recent firing of workers for approving a much lower bid to an out of area contractor rather than a well connected local one is another example.

The Mayor has added a provision to the Constitution to not allow a true Constitutional Convention for at least 5 years after statehood. Does the Council have the courage to oppose the Mayors dictatorial moves which many testifiers brought to the Councils's attention? These moves include her creating a committee of 5, with the Council Chairman on it, to write/approve this Constitution when this was not in their job descriptions when we elected them. Holding 3 days of Constitutional Convention, which in fact were merely hearings with people allowed 3 minutes to testify, with no one elected as a Delegate to actually write or vote was a total denial of the 1982 Constitution process. Then elected Delegates worked and wrote a document DC voted to approve in Nov. 1982.

Now they want our YES vote for Statehood Nov. 8. This vote contains the POISON PILL of an undated Constitution that is dangerous and anti-democratic. Vote NO if the Council fails to correct and date the Mayor's dictatorial Constitution before you vote.

7. The New Columbia Statehood Commission has proposed a Statehood Initiative that calls for an Advisory Referendum that includes approval of a new Constitution and boundaries to be adopted by the DC Council. If you had designed the Statehood Initiative, would it be different in any way, and if so, how?

Many of the problems with the Mayor's proposed Statehood Initiative are described above in question 6., but here is how I would have done it differently.

With voter input, I would have prepared an Advisory Referendum for voting on Nov. 8, through the regular Initiative process with many thousands of petition signatures by DC Voters. There would have been 3 separately voted sub-items on the ballot. The

Initiative would have included a stand alone vote for Statehood. There also would have been a separate call for a Constitutional Convention, like 1982, beginning a date early in 2017 with a date for completion. A separate vote for a manner of electing Constitutional Convention delegates and the number of delegates would have been included.

No actions influencing the time and content of the Constitution should be made by the current Council which still has two lame duck members. The repudiation of 3 of the Mayor's supporters in the Primary elections makes current Council actions regarding our future Constitution highly inappropriate.

Detailed articles related to some of the issues above can be found on my blog: **gleaikin.blogspot.com**. Click INDEX under my photos for a complete list of over 70 articles which I write in detail and update where appropriate.