



Questionnaire for At Large (D) Council Candidates

Candidate: [Oye Owolewa](#)

Ward 1

- 1. What, to you, are Ward 1's best qualities? What do you see as its challenges and opportunities?*

Ward 1's greatest quality is the opportunity created by its richness, its culture, its diversity, and its creativity. So many different people live close to one another in Ward 1 including immigrants, longtime Black residents, young people, artists, workers, families, and new to the neighborhood folks. That kind of density and diversity can be a tremendous asset. It creates the possibility for connection, collaboration, and shared power.

But diversity alone is not enough. If leaders and bridge builders are not intentionally helping people connect, diversity can coexist with segregation, mistrust, and division. That is harmful. Ward 1 has all the ingredients for something better. The ward already holds so many of the

solutions people need: small businesses, health providers, cultural spaces, schools, faith communities, and mutual aid networks. The challenge is making sure people can afford to stay, feel safe, and actually access those supports.

The opportunity in Ward 1 is to become a model for the whole District, not just as a diverse ward, but as a connected one. If we can build stronger bridges across communities, Ward 1 can help inspire a larger movement of belonging, shared investment, and collective action across DC.

- 2. What would be your number one priority for Ward 1 as an At Large Councilmember?*

My number one priority for Ward 1 would be defending democratic power and local self-government. We cannot solve problems together if out-of-state actors can override our budget, disrupt our plans, control our land, and interfere in our

daily lives. That is not democracy, and it is one of the biggest barriers to building the kind of stable, affordable, and safe District Ward 1 residents deserve.

As DC's elected U.S. Shadow Representative, I have already been doing this work. I know that statehood and home rule are not abstract ideas. They shape whether we can protect immigrant families, invest in housing, preserve local businesses, and respond to residents instead of Congress. For Ward 1, this is especially urgent. It is one of the most diverse parts of the District, and its residents deserve a government that answers to them, not to politicians from states they have never lived in.

Once we protect our democratic rights, we can more fully address affordability, housing costs, utility bills, health care access, and grocery prices. We do that by investing in people, protecting tenants, standing up to federal overreach, and making sure Ward 1 residents have real control over the future of their communities.

3. *The over 700,000 residents of the District often have differing—and sometimes competing—priorities, and their engagement with their elected officials varies widely. How will you balance these competing needs, and ensure fair, effective representation for all District residents, including Ward 1 residents?*

As a former ANC Commissioner, I worked at the hyper-local level where people are making decisions about their homes, streets, and communities. In those spaces, voices are passionate and sometimes competing. I learned that leadership means creating processes where people are heard and respected, but where the loudest voice does not automatically become the only voice that matters.

Balancing competing priorities starts with recognizing that not every voice enters the process with the same power. Fair representation does not mean simply splitting the difference between competing interests. It means making sure working people, renters, immigrants, seniors, young people, and communities historically excluded from decision-making are truly heard and reflected in policy.

I have also demonstrated the ability to build broad coalitions. Our campaign is supported by the Working Families Party, Unite Here! Local 25 and Local 23, LiUNA, the Washington Teachers Union, DC Voters for Animals, Pro-Animal DC, Ghana PAC, Nigerian American PAC, Councilmember Brianne Nadeau, Jews United for Justice, 314 Action, and Cries for Change. That coalition reflects the kind of District we want to build together, one rooted in workers' rights, affordability, compassion, and shared opportunity.

At the same time, I am running on a clear platform that is pro-worker, pro-affordability, and pro-community. While I will always listen and engage with

complex issues, voters deserve to know the values their representatives bring to the Council.

On the Council, that means helping facilitate productive conversations among members and between the Council and the executive branch so we can find solutions that move the District forward.

For Ward 1 residents, it also means staying present and accountable. I will maintain strong communication with ANCs, tenant leaders, small businesses, schools, and community groups. At-Large members should not float above neighborhoods. We should help connect them, represent them fairly, and ensure more residents see themselves reflected in the decisions shaping the District.

DC Council

General

- 1. Which two Council committees established at the beginning of Council Period 26 (January 2025) would you like to serve on?*

Health, Business and Economic Development

- 2. Why did you select those committees, and what would your top one or two priorities be for each committee?*

As a pharmacist and public health professional, I have seen firsthand how gaps in coverage, unaffordable prescriptions, and clinic closures push families into crisis. The Committee on Health is where the Council can confront those failures directly. My priorities would be restoring and permanently protecting Medicaid and the DC Healthcare Alliance, raising Medicaid reimbursement rates so clinics and pharmacies can stay open, and addressing the District's maternal health and overdose crises with a real public health approach that includes harm reduction, treatment, and housing stability. I would also support the nurses organizing at Cedar

Hill Regional Medical Center to ensure healthcare workers have the voice and resources they need to provide quality care for patients.

At the same time, economic policy in DC has too often prioritized large developers and national chains while small businesses struggle to survive. Through the Committee on Business & Economic Development, I would focus on strengthening local businesses and workers by improving access to capital, reforming and expanding the Certified Business Enterprise program, and ensuring District contracting actually reaches small and local entrepreneurs.

Small businesses are part of the social fabric of neighborhoods. The constant churn of closures and speculation is not a healthy or community-centered economy. The District should be building an economy where local businesses, workers, and entrepreneurs can put down roots and grow alongside the communities they serve.

3. How will you ensure you and your staff are ready on day one to navigate DC government successfully?

One principle that has guided our campaign: you should run a campaign the way you intend to govern. From the beginning, we have built this campaign around relationships, coalition building, and real policy conversations across the District.

Our endorsements reflect that work. Labor unions, educators, immigrant communities, animal welfare advocates, and neighborhood leaders have come together around this campaign because we have spent years building trust and working alongside them. Those relationships are not just campaign endorsements, they are partnerships that will continue into governance.

We have also created a “51 for Oye” advisory council that brings together residents from across the District with subject matter expertise and lived experience. That group includes advocates, workers, small business owners, educators, and community leaders who help us think through policy challenges and practical solutions.

At the same time, we have been preparing seriously for the mechanics of governing. My team and I have been meeting with current and former Council staff, policy experts, and former councilmembers to better understand how legislation moves, how oversight works, and how offices can most effectively serve residents.

I also bring experience navigating District systems as a pharmacist, a frontline healthcare worker during COVID, and as a former ANC Commissioner. Those roles required working across agencies and institutions to solve problems for residents.

4. Knowing that you cannot answer every request of the residents in Ward 1, which constituent services will you prioritize?

Constituent services should focus first on the issues that most affect residents’ ability to live with stability and dignity in the District. That means prioritizing help with housing stability, access to healthcare and public benefits, public safety concerns, and navigating District agencies that can often feel complicated or inaccessible.

As a pharmacist, I have seen how government systems affect people's everyday lives. Patients frequently struggle to access healthcare coverage, medication, or services because of bureaucratic barriers. A Council office should help residents navigate those systems and connect them to the resources they are entitled to.

My office will also prioritize helping renters, seniors, returning citizens, and small businesses who often face the most challenges navigating government processes. Whether that means helping resolve issues with housing agencies, accessing workforce programs, or working through licensing and regulatory issues, our goal will be to make government more responsive.

At the same time, clear priorities matter. My campaign has been transparent about the values guiding our work: affordability, workers' rights, strong public services, and inclusive economic opportunity. The coalition that has endorsed this campaign reflects a broad mandate for those priorities.

District Legislative Policy

*The following legislation was introduced in Council Period 26. The bills listed below were chosen because they propose legislative solutions to a variety of issues that affect Ward 1 and are not yet law. This exercise is designed to put a candidate in the shoes of a Councilmember who would evaluate legislation that could become law. **Choose two.***

- Streatery Program Emergency Amendment Act of 2025
- Moped Registration Accountability Amendment Act of 2025
- RESALE Amendment Act of 2025
- **Place-Based Substance Use Disorder Outreach Amendment Act of 2025**
- **Rent Stabilization Protection Amendment Act of 2025**
- E911 Modernization Amendment Act of 2025
- Autonomous Vehicles Amendment Act of 2025
- Open Meetings Clarification Amendment Act of 2025
- Small Retailer Property Tax Credit Expansion Amendment Act of 2025
- Juvenile Curfew Amendment Act of 2025
- Advancing Equity in Special Education Protocols Amendment Act of 2025

1. *Explain, for both bills selected above, what you see as each bill's nexus with Ward 1.*

Rent Stabilization Protection Amendment Act Ward 1 is one of the most renter-heavy areas of the District, and rising rents continue to push residents out of their neighborhoods. Housing stability is essential to preserving the ward's economic diversity and community fabric.

Rent-stabilized housing helps keep working families, seniors, and longtime residents in place. When residents are displaced, schools lose students, small businesses lose customers, and neighborhoods lose the relationships that sustain them. Ward 1 also contains many buildings constructed during the early 2000s development boom. As these buildings age, the District must decide whether affordability protections expand with the housing stock or continue to shrink.
AND

Place-Based Substance Use Disorder Outreach Amendment Act As a health professional, I have seen firsthand in both Southeast DC and Ward 1 how behavioral health and overdose crises show up on our streets. Effective responses require meeting people where they are and connecting them to care. Because Ward 1 sits at the intersection of residential communities, nightlife corridors, and major transit routes, gaps in the District's behavioral health system are often most visible there. Outreach programs that bring trained professionals directly into the community play an important role in connecting vulnerable residents to care while helping neighborhoods respond to public health challenges with compassion and effectiveness.

2. *Explain, for both bills selected above, whether you would support or oppose each, and if you would propose any amendments.*

Rent Stabilization Protection Amendment Act

I support strengthening rent stabilization protections. Rent stabilization helps ensure that working families, seniors, and longtime residents can remain in their communities even as housing markets grow more expensive.

I would support amendments that expand the number of units covered under rent stabilization. In particular, the District should examine ways to include buildings that are currently outside the program, especially units that are roughly 10 to 20 years old. As the housing stock ages, the number of stabilized units should grow alongside the District rather than shrink over time.

Strong enforcement mechanisms and clear tenant education should also accompany any expansion so residents understand their rights and protections.

Place-Based Substance Use Disorder Outreach Amendment Act

I support this legislation because addressing substance use disorder requires a public health approach centered on outreach, harm reduction, and treatment.

As a pharmacist and public health professional, I have participated directly in harm reduction efforts, including Narcan distribution and protecting access to life-saving resources for residents in Southeast DC. Those experiences reinforced

the importance of meeting people where they are and supporting the frontline organizations that do this work every day.

If adopted, I would prioritize ensuring the program is fully funded and well coordinated with housing services, treatment providers, and community organizations. I would also support strengthening partnerships with direct service providers who already have trusted relationships with residents and are best positioned to deliver effective outreach.

District Budget Policy

1. *What are your top two budget priorities? Explain why your budget priorities align with the needs of Ward 1 residents. How will you, as a first-term Councilmember without a committee, work with your Council colleagues to meet budget needs?*

First, I would prioritize expanding housing stability. That means fully funding ERAP, the Local Rent Supplement Program, tenant protections, proactive housing inspections, and preservation strategies that keep existing affordable units from being lost. Ward 1 residents are facing intense rent pressure, displacement, and unsafe housing conditions, and the District must treat housing stability as a core responsibility.

Second, I would prioritize protecting health care and basic human services, especially Medicaid, the DC Healthcare Alliance, and behavioral health services. Ward 1 residents, like residents across the District, are living with the consequences of rising costs, mental health strain, and an overdose crisis that requires a strong public health response. Stability in housing and stability in health are deeply connected.

As a first-term At-Large Councilmember, I would approach the budget the same way I have approached public service: by building relationships early, doing the homework, and organizing around clear priorities. Our campaign has already been meeting with advocates, agency experts, current and former Council staff, and community leaders across the District. We have also built a broad coalition that includes labor, tenants, educators, and health advocates, and that coalition can help shape and defend budget priorities.

Even without chairing a committee, Councilmembers have the ability to organize colleagues, offer amendments, work closely with committee chairs, elevate community testimony, and build public support around key investments. I will also be prepared to speak up when budget decisions move in the wrong direction, particularly when pro-corporate or speculative development priorities come at the expense of housing stability, public health, and neighborhood needs.

My role will be to bring strong policy grounding, clear values, and a districtwide coalition into the budget process so Ward 1 residents and communities across the District are represented in the final budget.

2. *Ward 1 Democrats overwhelmingly identified affordability as their top issue they want their elected leaders to address. What is the top affordability concern you think Ward 1 residents face, and how will you use the constituent services, legislative, budgetary, or oversight powers (i.e. choose one) of the At-Large seat to address this concern?*

The top affordability concern facing Ward 1 residents is the rising cost of living, especially

housing and essential utilities. Rent is too high, too many residents are one emergency away from eviction, and longtime neighbors are being pushed out of the communities they helped build. At the same time, residents are facing increasingly high utility bills. Electricity, gas, and water costs have risen sharply, and many households feel squeezed by Pepco delivery fees, infrastructure surcharges, and rising rates that feel disconnected from how much energy they actually use.

If I had to choose one power of the At-Large seat to address this concern, I would focus on the budgetary power, because affordability ultimately depends on whether the District invests real resources in protecting residents.

On housing, I would fight to restore and fully fund ERAP so residents can stay housed when they fall behind. I would push to fully fund the Local Rent Supplement Program, tenant legal support, proactive inspections, and preservation strategies that keep existing affordable housing from being lost. Ward 1 is one of the most renter-heavy parts of the District, and without strong investment, displacement will continue.

Utility bills have also become a serious financial strain. Through the budget and oversight process, I would push for stronger utility affordability programs, expanded energy assistance, and greater accountability when regulated utilities shift rising infrastructure costs onto residents. No resident should have to choose between paying their utility bill and buying food or other basic necessities. The District should stand with residents and ensure families can keep the lights, heat, and water on during difficult times.

3. *Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports issued by the District's Chief Financial Officer consistently show that the District will bring in fewer financial resources in future years. At the same time, government program costs are rising. What are two solutions you would propose to address these trends, if anything?*

The District's fiscal challenge is not simply that costs are rising. It is that our revenue system and development strategy are not keeping pace with the economy or distributing responsibility fairly. Two solutions are needed: strengthening progressive revenue and reducing ineffective subsidies.

First, the District should modernize its tax system so it better reflects ability to pay. Right now, working families shoulder a disproportionate share of the tax burden while high-income households, inherited wealth, and highly profitable corporations remain lightly taxed. I support increasing taxes on very high incomes, strengthening the capital gains tax, adjusting the estate tax so large inheritances contribute to the public good, and ensuring large corporations operating in DC pay their fair share. These reforms would allow the District to raise stable revenue while protecting middle- and working-class residents. Revenue reforms should also include closing loopholes and decoupling DC from harmful federal tax changes that would drain hundreds of millions from the District.

Second, the District must reduce its reliance on expensive development subsidies that too often fail to deliver clear public benefits. DC has increasingly relied on tools like tax abatements, Opportunity Zones, and Tax Increment Financing to spur development, frequently subsidizing luxury projects while basic services face budget pressure. I would push for stronger oversight of these subsidies and redirect resources toward housing preservation, small business support, transit, and essential services.

Together, these two approaches create a more stable fiscal foundation: a revenue system that grows with the economy and a budget that prioritizes residents over giveaways.

District Government Oversight (500 word limit per question)

- 1. What two Ward 1-specific government performance issues do you think could be addressed through persistent oversight, rather than legislation or budgeting?*

One issue that requires stronger oversight is how the District implements violence prevention and community safety programs. The District has already adopted policies through the NEAR Act that emphasize prevention, intervention, and community-based responses to violence. The challenge is not the absence of policy but the inconsistent implementation and coordination across agencies.

Persistent oversight can ensure that violence interruption and prevention programs are receiving the resources intended for them and that agencies are coordinating effectively with community partners. Oversight should examine how funds are allocated, how programs measure success, and whether prevention

strategies are reaching the communities that need them most. When prevention programs are properly supported and evaluated, they can reduce violence while strengthening community trust.

A second area where oversight is essential is the District's response to homelessness. Ward 1 residents see neighbors living in extremely difficult conditions, often without consistent connection to services that already exist within the District's system. Multiple agencies are responsible for outreach, shelter access, behavioral health support, and housing placement, but coordination between those systems is often inconsistent.

Oversight should focus on how agencies work together to connect residents experiencing homelessness with services and permanent housing. This includes examining response times, outreach effectiveness, and whether individuals who engage with the system are successfully moving into stable housing.

- 2. Which one or two agencies will you prioritize for performance oversight during the 2027 performance oversight hearings? Explain why your performance oversight priorities align with the needs of Ward 1 residents. Identify one or two specific programs within those agencies you would direct your oversight.*

I would prioritize performance oversight of the Department of Health Care Finance and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development.

First, I would focus on the Department of Health Care Finance, which administers DC Medicaid and the DC Healthcare Alliance. These programs provide essential coverage for tens of thousands of District residents, including many low-income families, seniors, immigrants, and working residents in Ward 1. Coverage alone does not guarantee access to care, and persistent oversight is needed to ensure residents can actually obtain timely appointments, prescriptions, and mental health services.

My oversight would focus particularly on provider participation and reimbursement rates, which often determine whether residents can find doctors willing to accept Medicaid or Alliance patients. I would also examine contracts with healthcare management companies and staffing agencies to ensure public funds are being used effectively and that the District is not overpaying private intermediaries while residents struggle to access care. As a pharmacist and healthcare professional, I have seen firsthand how gaps between policy and implementation can prevent patients from receiving the care they need.

Second, I would prioritize oversight of development incentive agreements through the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development.

Ward 1 residents have a strong interest in ensuring that public subsidies for private development deliver real public benefits.

One example is the public incentive agreement associated with The Line Hotel in Adams Morgan. The District provided millions of dollars in tax incentives for that project in exchange for commitments such as local hiring, construction jobs, and union labor. Oversight should examine whether those commitments have been fulfilled and whether Ward 1 residents have actually benefited from the agreement.

This type of oversight is essential to ensure that when the District provides public subsidies, developers deliver on their promises to residents and workers.

3. *Which one or two agencies will you prioritize for budget oversight during the Fiscal Year 2028 budget oversight hearings? Explain why your budget oversight priorities align with the needs of Ward 1 residents. Identify one or two specific programs within those agencies you would direct your oversight.*

I would prioritize budget oversight of the Metropolitan Police Department and the District's healthcare spending, particularly through agencies such as the Department of Health Care Finance.

The Metropolitan Police Department's budget has grown significantly in recent years, yet many residents still feel their safety concerns are not being addressed in ways that build trust or long-term stability. Effective oversight should examine how resources are allocated and whether spending aligns with evidence-based public safety strategies. Research consistently shows that prevention programs, violence interruption, behavioral health support, and community-based services can reduce violence when properly funded. Oversight should evaluate whether the District is investing appropriately in prevention rather than relying primarily on reactive responses after crimes occur.

Oversight must also examine issues of accountability and transparency within MPD. Recent controversies, including leadership concerns around crime data reporting, highlight the importance of strong Council oversight to ensure public trust. I would also examine reports that MPD officers have engaged in cooperation with federal immigration enforcement, which raises concerns about whether local policing resources are being diverted away from community safety and toward activities that undermine trust with immigrant residents, including many in Ward 1.

I would also prioritize oversight of healthcare spending in the District. The District spends billions of dollars through Medicaid, the DC Healthcare Alliance, and related health programs. Oversight should examine contracts with healthcare management companies, staffing firms, and outside providers to ensure public

dollars are being used efficiently and that residents are receiving high-quality care.

- 4. In November 2026, District residents will elect a new Mayor for the first time in 12 years. Councilmembers will be responsible for confirming the appointment of new deputy mayors, new agency heads, and new members on District commissions and boards at a volume not seen in recent history. How will you evaluate nominees and decide whether to confirm a new mayor's nominees to lead an agency or policy-making body?*

When confirming nominees to lead District agencies or serve on boards and commissions, my approach will begin with the same principle that guided our campaign: building a governing team that reflects the needs of DC residents. Our campaign has been supported by a broad coalition of workers, tenants, community leaders, and advocates, and the people leading District agencies should understand and respect the priorities of the communities they serve.

First, I will evaluate a nominee's professional experience and ability to manage complex public institutions. Many District agencies oversee large budgets and essential services, so leadership requires strong management skills and a clear understanding of how government programs affect residents' daily lives.

Second, ethics and integrity will be central to my evaluation. Given past examples of government corruption and misuse of public trust, nominees must demonstrate transparency, independence, and a clear commitment to serving the public interest rather than private or political interests.

Third, I will prioritize candidates who know the District well and have a real stake in the outcomes of their policy decisions. Leaders who understand DC's neighborhoods, communities, and history are better positioned to make decisions that work for residents.

Finally, I will look for nominees who are willing to communicate openly with the Council and the public. Governing requires navigating competing interests and making difficult decisions, and that process works best when agency leaders are prepared to engage honestly, explain their decisions, and work collaboratively even when there are disagreements.

Federal Affairs (500 word limit per question)

- 1. How should the DC Council use its oversight and legislative authority to ensure that the constitutional rights of DC residents are upheld?*

The DC Council has an obligation to use every available tool to protect the constitutional rights and civil liberties of District residents, especially in a District where federal authority can often override local democracy.

First, the Council must use oversight to ensure that District agencies respect the rights of residents regardless of immigration status, race, or political activity. This includes ensuring that local law enforcement complies with the District's Sanctuary Values Act and does not divert resources to assist federal immigration enforcement in ways that undermine community trust or violate District law. Oversight hearings, data transparency, and agency accountability are essential to making sure these protections are real in practice.

Second, the Council must defend residents' rights to free speech and assembly. Washington has a long tradition of protest and civic engagement, and the District government has a responsibility to ensure that residents and visitors can safely exercise those rights. Oversight should examine how law enforcement manages demonstrations and ensure that public safety practices protect constitutional rights rather than restrict them.

Finally, the Council must protect the democratic rights of District residents by defending voter-approved initiatives and resisting attempts to undermine local self-government. Residents deserve confidence that their votes and voices will be respected.

- 2. What is your understanding of the District's limitations in policy-making and policy implementation given its status as a federal district, and how would you, as an elected official, balance those limitations with representing your constituents?*

The District operates under unique limitations because Congress retains authority over our laws and budget. Even when DC residents and their elected officials pass legislation, Congress can override those decisions or restrict how local funds are used. That reality creates constant uncertainty and limits the District's ability to respond quickly to the needs of residents.

I have worked at multiple levels of District governance, first as an ANC Commissioner and later as the elected U.S. Shadow Representative. Those roles taught me how policy in DC often operates across overlapping layers: hyper-local neighborhood concerns, District-wide policymaking, and federal oversight that can intervene at any moment. Balancing those levels requires both practical judgment and persistence.

As a Councilmember, I would work within the legal framework of Home Rule while continuing to push for greater local control. That means crafting policies that can move forward despite federal constraints, while also being honest with residents about how congressional interference affects local decisions.

It also means defending the will of DC voters. When residents pass ballot initiatives or support policies through their elected officials, those decisions deserve to be respected. Maintaining transparency about federal limitations while continuing to advocate for local authority is essential to building trust with residents.

Ultimately, the long-term solution to these structural limitations is DC statehood. Until then, the responsibility of District leaders is to navigate those constraints while continuing to represent the priorities and democratic voice of the people who live here.

- 3. How will you work to advance statehood as an At-Large Councilmember? What actions have you taken to advance DC statehood and defend Home Rule as a resident of Ward 1?*

Advancing DC statehood has been central to my public service. I was elected three times by District voters to serve as DC's U.S. Shadow Representative, a position created specifically to advocate for statehood and full representation in Congress.

In that role, I worked to build national support for DC statehood by meeting with members of Congress, organizing advocacy efforts, and traveling across the country to challenge attempts to interfere with DC's self-government. I have lobbied directly on Capitol Hill and organized with advocates across the District to defend home rule.

As a Councilmember, I will continue that work by organizing residents, strengthening partnerships with national organizations, and ensuring that the Council remains vocal and united in support of statehood. Local leadership plays an important role in maintaining national attention on this issue.

I will also work to defend Home Rule in practical ways, including protecting voter-approved initiatives, like I-83, resisting congressional interference in local policies, and ensuring that District agencies follow laws designed to protect residents' rights.

DC residents deserve the same democratic rights as every other American: representation in Congress and the ability to govern themselves. Until statehood is achieved, I will continue using every platform available to advocate for full democracy for the people of the District.

Democratic Party

- 1. What does it mean to you to be a Democrat?*

To me, being a Democrat means being part of a broad coalition working to build a more just and inclusive society. The Democratic Party brings together workers, families, educators, small business owners, immigrants, and community leaders to solve problems and expand opportunity. It is a political home for people who believe government should improve people's lives and protect basic rights.

Being a Democrat also means being open to new ideas and approaches. Our communities are constantly changing, and our policies must evolve to meet new challenges. Whether expanding healthcare access, protecting workers, strengthening public education, or building an economy

that works for everyone, Democrats have moved the country forward by listening to communities and responding to their needs.

For me, being a Democrat is also about organizing. Progress rarely comes from one leader or one election. It happens when people come together around shared values and work collectively for change. The Democratic Party connects local communities to a broader national movement for justice and opportunity. Finally, being a Democrat means recognizing we are part of a long historical movement. Generations of activists, organizers, and public servants fought for civil rights, voting rights, labor protections, and economic fairness.

2. *Initiative 83, passed with 73 percent voter support, established ranked-choice voting and overturned closed primaries, but was subject to appropriations. The D.C. Democratic Party opposes open primaries, and has sued to block I-83's semi-open primaries. The Ward 1 Democrats have taken no position on I-83. The Council funded ranked-choice voting, but has not funded open primaries. Do you support or oppose open primaries? Why or why not?*

Yes, I support open primaries and the full implementation of Initiative 83. DC voters approved the measure by a wide margin because they want a more open and participatory democracy, and that decision should be respected.

Washington, DC has many independent voters who are currently excluded from primary elections, even though those primaries often decide the final outcome. Allowing independents to participate ensures more residents have a voice in selecting their leaders.

Open primaries do not weaken the Democratic Party. Democratic voters will still put forward strong candidates, while expanding participation strengthens trust in the democratic process.

3. *Congressional Republicans have introduced multiple bills attacking Home Rule, and dozens of Congressional Democrats, including some representing districts in our*

neighboring states of Virginia and Maryland, have voted for several of these bills. How would you approach the need to educate House and Senate Democrats on the importance of Home Rule, the District's unique status, and the need for statehood?

I have already been doing this work as DC's elected U.S. Shadow Representative, a role dedicated to advocating for statehood and defending home rule in Congress.

In that position, I have met with members of Congress and their staff, organized advocacy efforts, and spoken publicly about the unique challenges DC residents face. A major part of that work is educating lawmakers who often do not understand how frequently Congress interferes with the District's local decisions.

DC residents pay federal taxes, serve in the military, and contribute to the national economy, yet we still lack voting representation in Congress. At the same time, members of Congress who do not live here regularly introduce legislation to override local DC policies. Helping members of Congress understand the real consequences of that interference is essential.

In some cases, that advocacy requires confronting lawmakers directly. When members of Congress attempt to override DC laws, I believe they should hear directly from the people whose democracy they are undermining. I have even traveled to states like Utah to speak with lawmakers pushing legislation that would interfere with DC governance.

Education alone is not enough. Advancing home rule and statehood requires building coalitions with Democratic members of Congress, civil rights organizations, labor groups, and allies across the country who believe in democratic representation. When lawmakers understand that DC's fight is about fundamental democratic rights, support for home rule and statehood becomes much stronger.

As a Councilmember, I would continue this work by using every platform available to defend home rule, educate national leaders, and organize support for statehood

Other

1. What differentiates you from your opponents?

First, I currently serve as DC's elected U.S. Shadow Representative. In that role I have advocated nationally for DC statehood and defended home rule, meeting with members of Congress and organizing advocacy across the District. That

experience has given me a deep understanding of how federal decisions affect local policy and the daily lives of DC residents.

Second, our campaign has built the broadest coalition in the race. We currently have the most endorsements, the largest volunteer network, and the strongest campaign infrastructure. Our supporters include community leaders, advocates, workers, and residents from across the District who want to see new leadership and broader collaboration in local government.

Third, my professional background brings a different perspective to public service. As a pharmacist, I have spent years working directly with residents and families, helping them navigate healthcare systems and supporting their well-being. That frontline experience shapes how I approach policy and reminds me that government decisions directly affect people's daily lives.

Finally, I believe deeply in coalition building. Too often our politics becomes siloed, with communities and issues treated separately. My goal is to bring together a wider range of voices and perspectives to address the District's challenges collaboratively.

2. How do you plan to win this race?

Our campaign is built around a strong organizing strategy focused on direct voter contact and broad community engagement.

We were the first campaign in the race to begin knocking doors, texting voters, and phonebanking across the District. Our volunteers and staff have already spoken with thousands of residents and continue expanding that outreach every week. Direct conversations with voters remain the most effective way to build trust and communicate our vision for the District.

We are also running a robust communications program. Our campaign has already sent a district-wide mailer and will continue using mail, digital outreach, and text messaging to reach voters where they are. Our texting program alone has already contacted more than 70,000 voters.

Equally important is the coalition of supporters helping amplify our message. Endorsers, volunteers, and community leaders are actively sharing the campaign with their networks and encouraging neighbors to get involved.

Finally, our campaign is investing heavily in relational organizing. Through initiatives like our "51 for Oye" governance council, we are building a network of residents who are expanding our reach and helping bring more people into the campaign.

3. How much money do you need to raise to win this race?

Our campaign has already raised approximately \$330,000 and built a strong financial foundation for the race.

To fully execute our campaign plan, we estimate that we need to raise an additional \$100,000. These resources will allow us to expand voter outreach and communication during the final phase of the campaign.

4. How many votes do you need to win this race, and how do you plan on getting those votes?

Based on turnout projections and ranked-choice voting transfers, we estimate that approximately 61,009 votes will be needed to win the race.

Our strategy focuses on identifying and engaging a significant portion of those voters well before Election Day. Our campaign has already begun this process through door knocking, phonebanking, texting, email outreach, and community events.

Our goal is to identify roughly 25 percent of our target voters early and maintain consistent communication with them throughout the campaign. These conversations allow us to understand voters' priorities while ensuring they have the information they need about the election.

Relational organizing is also central to our strategy. Through our "51 for Oye" governance council and other community networks, we are encouraging supporters to talk with friends, neighbors, and colleagues about the campaign.

Finally, we are creating opportunities for residents to engage with the campaign through community events and gatherings that bring people together across neighborhoods.

5. What is something that you want to share that you did not get to share?

One thing I want to emphasize is how strongly I believe the District is entering a new moment for leadership.

For the first time in more than a decade, DC residents will be electing a new mayor and several new leaders across the city. That transition creates an opportunity to rethink how our government works and how we bring people into the decision-making process.

Too often our politics operates in silos. Different communities, professions, and policy areas are treated as separate conversations. But the challenges facing the District—housing, healthcare, education, economic opportunity, and public safety—are deeply interconnected.

My goal is to build broader coalitions that bring together voices from across the District. That means working with residents, workers, educators, healthcare professionals, business owners, and community leaders to develop solutions that reflect the full diversity of the city.

My background reflects that approach. As a healthcare professional, I have worked directly with residents and families navigating complex systems. As an ANC commissioner, I learned how local government affects neighborhoods block by block. And as DC's elected Shadow Representative, I have fought nationally for statehood and defended the District's right to govern itself.

I am excited about the possibility of bringing that approach to the DC Council and helping build a government that reflects the energy, diversity, and creativity of the District itself.