



Council Chairperson Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the 2022 Ward 7 Democrats Candidate Forum for candidates in the Democratic Primary for the **Council Chairperson**. Below is a pre-Forum questionnaire that will give you the opportunity to expand on your position and goals in depth and afford our membership the opportunity to truly understand your positions.

Please respond no later than 11:59pm on Friday, February 18, 2022. **Timely completion and submission of this questionnaire is a prerequisite to participate in the Candidate Forum.**

Candidate Information

Your responses will be posted on the Ward 7 Dems webpage. Please provide a headshot of the candidate.

Candidate Name: Erin Palmer

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General Questions

1. To the incumbent: What changes would you propose to make in the coming Council Period to improve operations of the Council? What improvements should have been made during the previous Council Period?

I would like to provide an answer to this question, even though it is addressed to the current Council Chair, as it speaks directly to the proposals in my [DC Council Accountability Plan](#). The Plan is the first ever of its kind – a comprehensive, evidence-based plan to build a more effective, modern, and ethical DC Council that residents can trust. The Plan is rooted in my professional expertise as an ethics and accountability lawyer.

While the Plan is the first of its kind, many of the proposals are rooted in two reports issued by expert organizations – the [National Council of State Legislatures](#) and the [DC Appleseed Center](#) – in 1999 that included recommendations to adjust key DC Council processes to ensure ethical behavior and an effective government. But the Council has not implemented many of these recommendations and is falling further behind the times. The public continues to witness indiscretion and ineffectiveness, most recently in the scandals surrounding ex-Councilmember Jack Evans and [the current Chair's inability to expeditiously address clear and present corruption](#).

My Plan focuses on four key areas:

1. **Empower the DC Council's Legislative and Oversight Function** through strengthening the Council as a whole, reducing over-concentration of power in the Chair position, revitalizing committees, and adding legislative research capacity;
2. **Strengthen an Ethical and Accountable DC Council** by holding the Council to the highest ethical standards and implementing practiced and effective safeguards to prevent and deter ethical misconduct;
3. **Ensure an Inclusive and Accessible DC Council** by using modern technology and best practices to ensure all residents can easily and consistently participate in government; and
4. **Support DC Council Workers and Workplace Accountability** through ensuring a workplace in which all employees are treated as professionals and one that reflects the diverse communities we serve.

We need improved DC Council accountability now more than ever. In the face of significant disruption, trauma, and hardship from the Covid-19 pandemic, we shouldn't have to worry about corrupt politicians. We shouldn't have to worry about the Council's inability to perform effective oversight. We shouldn't have to struggle to access and participate in local government. I will work every day to build trust in our legislature.

2. To the challenger: If elected, you would be the first Council Chair to have never served on the Council before taking office. How would you overcome the significant learning curve to establish yourself as a legislator and as the leader of the legislature in a system where the mayor has significant political and governmental power?

I will hit the ground running as DC Council Chairwoman. My professional background as an ethics and accountability lawyer for the federal Judiciary has given me invaluable and unique insights. Before leaving my job to run for DC Council Chairwoman, I served as Staff Counsel to the Committee on Judicial Conduct and Disability – the final review body of judicial misconduct complaints against federal judges. When the federal Judiciary faced severe allegations of a federal judge's sexual misconduct and harassment of his law clerks, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court appointed a Workplace Conduct Working Group to assess and revise the Judiciary's workplace conduct procedures. I also staffed that Group and shepherded through important workplace accountability reforms that improved bystander intervention and accountability for judges – that they have to take action upon known misconduct by a colleague – and streamlined and made easier the ability to file judicial misconduct complaints.

I am extremely proud of my work to improve institutional accountability within the federal Judiciary. We instituted important, meaningful reform within an institution that is deeply status quo oriented, in many ways resistant to change, and often an old boys' club. I am uniquely equipped to build relationships and engage in collaborative decisionmaking to

move important governance and legislative reforms forward. This work gave me the knowledge, expertise, and grounding to put forward a comprehensive [DC Council Accountability Plan](#).

My [DC Council Accountability Plan](#) proposes governance changes that will improve collaborative and collegial action by the Council as a whole and empower the Council as an institution to better make laws and conduct oversight. While some consider it a soft skill, I will work continuously to build relationships and empower other Councilmembers, including through:

- improving the process of forming and assigning membership to Council Committees to assure neutrality, expertise, and consistency and to avoid the appearance of impropriety;
- collaborating with fellow Councilmembers to build a core list of standing Committees and agencies that fall within each Committee's purview to reflect Council priorities; ensure consistent, continual oversight and legislation; and avoid the appearance of favoritism; and
- instituting a neutral Committee membership and chair appointment process, such as seniority bidding, a process used by many legislative bodies across the country that adds stability, expertise, and neutrality.

My interest in collaborative Council action is rooted in a deeply held belief that our democratic institutions are valuable beyond the individual elected official. It means that not only will I come in ready to legislate, conduct oversight, and act as a co-equal branch of government to hold the Executive accountable, but that every Councilmember will be better equipped to do so, as well.

Councilmembers – including the Chair – do not and should not operate as islands. My [DC Council Accountability Plan](#) calls for a number of institutionalized, nonpartisan resources and better use of existing entities that provide additional research and expertise to assist the Council in making laws and conducting oversight, including:

- expanding dedicated, nonpartisan Committee support staff to ensure continuity, retention of institutional knowledge, and additional capacity to legislate and conduct oversight;
- re-instituting a [comprehensive, nonpartisan, and objective research service](#) to assist the Council in crafting legislative solutions to DC's challenges, including robust consideration of best practices across jurisdictions; encourage holistic knowledge building across Council offices; help the Council better target public funds toward evidence-based programs; and supplement the research work of the Council's Office of the Budget Director;
- enhancing and increasing the use of the DC Auditor's Office, including through additional hearings on important audit findings and enhanced Committee consideration and use of recommendations, as a tool to ensure robust, consistent oversight [to improve agency performance](#); and

- expanding the work of the [Council Office of Racial Equity](#) to include review of the DC budget and Council operations, as well as requiring the Council to respond to racial equity impact assessments, including providing its rationale for supporting or opposing legislation that maintains or worsens racial inequity.

Good legislators build strong, effective, and well-supported teams. I believe in supporting DC Council workers, ensuring workplace accountability, and focusing on a diverse and inclusive workplace. My [DC Council Accountability Plan](#) reflects those values by calling for pay equity, hiring practices that promote diversity, and employee-led standing groups to provide important feedback on workplace policies, including anti-bias and anti-sexual harassment policies.

It's also important to note the advantages I bring to the table as someone who comes from outside the DC Council. I'm committed to instituting reforms to ensure ethical conduct and accountability, and I'm not beholden to political favors traded in backrooms like our current Council Chair. When the current Chair first became interim Chair, he was warned about the ethical problems of Councilmember Michael Brown, but [he insisted on deference and the appointment](#) of Councilmember Brown as Chair Pro Tem. Councilmember Brown was then [arrested and convicted for taking bribes](#) while serving as Chair Pro Tem. In part because of the long relationship with the current Council Chair, Councilmember Jack Evans [remained in power on the DC Council](#) for over a year after [the Metro Board forced him out due to longstanding ethics violations](#). Being cozy with his colleagues has dimmed the current Chair's ability to clearly fulfill his Council management and governance duties and ensure the Council remains ethical and free from corruption.

For years, the DC Council's influence and stature as a co-equal branch of government has declined. The Council Chair has continually deferred to the Executive, the federal government, and even DC agencies rather than advocate for the Council's intended role. His efforts before Congress to oppose local Council control on zoning [were derided](#) by one member of Congress as akin to saying: "Please don't give me authority, I can't be trusted." When one local DC agency testified before the Council that legislation can just be ["a law we are not enforcing,"](#) the Council Chair made no effort to ensure agencies actually follow Council legislation. Most recently, in declaring At-Large Councilmember Robert White's efforts to make our children's schools safer [out of order due to a deadline](#), the Chair implicitly ceded to the Mayor that the Council will take no action or review if the Executive schedules policy announcements close enough to the next legislative meeting. The people of DC deserve a government of checks and balances with co-equal branches of government. And we need a Chairwoman who can make that happen.

Finally, I will note that there are only two viable candidates in this race: myself and the current Council Chair. Our electoral system – while greatly [enhanced by the Fair Elections program in terms of who is able to run for office](#) – still deeply favors incumbents. The privilege of incumbency coupled with a current Council Chair who has concentrated power and decisionmaking in himself and has indicated a willingness to

[reward](#) or [punish](#) other Councilmembers based on his interests, leads to an environment where no sitting Councilmember has ever challenged the current Council Chair as the incumbent. That's not good for democracy. We all benefit from a competitive race with a qualified challenger like myself.

3. The various Council Committees sometimes need to work together to provide effective oversight of the Executive. For example, oversight over the Executive's management of the COVID response effort affected the subject areas of no fewer than five Committees. With the benefit of two years' hindsight, what would you have done differently to provide oversight of the executive's response to COVID-19?

The DC Council could have been empowered to conduct more thorough, detailed, and focused oversight of the Executive's Covid-19 response. While the Council formed a Special Committee on COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery, that Committee has held only a handful of hearings and its mandate ends March 1, 2022. As Council Chairwoman, I would have engaged in early and continual collaboration with fellow Councilmembers to define the scope of a special committee focused on Covid-19 and ensuring coordination across Council Committees.

Resource and support staff enhancements would have greatly improved the DC Council's oversight of the Executive's Covid-19 response, including special committee action and oversight. Use of nonpartisan committee support staff and a [comprehensive, nonpartisan, and objective research service](#) would have better allowed the Council to conduct research on best practices across jurisdictions, hold government agencies accountable for their delivery of services like testing and vaccination, and legislate mitigation strategies. Such staff would have a stronger ability to work across and coordinate among Council Committees.

We have seen repeated failures in DC Council oversight, specifically as related to [Covid-19 and schools](#). Our children have paid the price of the current Council Chair's unilateral decision to dissolve the Education Committee, concentration of power in the Chair position, and lack of focus on DC schools. As the Covid-19 public health emergency unfolded, we saw schools wholly unprepared for a necessary transition to virtual learning, including a system with [inadequate and inequitable access to technology and Internet](#) and that [completely neglected incarcerated youth with disabilities](#). And we saw testing and vaccination rollouts built around a [first-come, first-served model](#) that have resulted in [deep disparities in vaccination rates and deaths from Covid-19](#).

Worse yet, despite 18 months knowing students would ultimately be back in school buildings, we watched as students returned this fall to [faulty HVAC systems, missing HEPA filters](#), lack of outdoor equipment for meals, and lack of basic PPE and cleaning supplies, while [parents and community members resorted to a series of self-help measures to fill the gaps](#). In addition, the current Council Chair has failed to conduct meaningful oversight of the use of current federal funding related to Covid-19 and schools, with [only 4.2% of those \\$600 million having been reported as spent](#).

Sometimes it feels like our Council leadership has given up on even trying. When recent emergency legislation was proposed to respond to the Mayor's inadequate school safety measures, the current Council Chair [refused to even consider it](#). He created a loophole for the Mayor to avoid accountability and undermined the Council as a co-equal branch of government.

4. How can Councilmembers better connect with communities that have lost faith in the ability of the government to solve problems?

As an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner and as a challenger in the race for DC Council Chair, I talk to a lot of DC residents who have lost faith in the government's ability to solve problems. Some of that stems from the government's failures to provide equitable, high-quality government services – everything from leaf and trash collection, to traffic safety infrastructure, to federally funded rent relief. Some of it stems from a belief (often borne out in practice) that elected officials care more about serving corporate donors than the people of DC. And some of it is our government's failure to engage, educate, and bring people into the democratic process.

Connecting with communities that have lost faith in government requires being present in communities, investing in community needs, and building trust. Our city has a longstanding history of disinvesting in communities, primarily east of the Anacostia River and our Black neighbors. Disinvestment shows people that the government does not see or value them.

In my experience, there is nothing that compares to physically experiencing our neighborhoods. Part of how I engage as a Commissioner and as a candidate is continuous physical presence in my neighborhood and neighborhoods across DC. As part of Erin on Your Block events, I walk, take public transportation, attend community cleanups, visit neighborhood shops, and take the time to see and experience the physical space around me in neighborhoods across DC. The other aspect of investing in communities is money, and as Council Chairwoman, I am committed to a budget that corrects for historic disinvestment and oversight that pushes DC government agencies to deliver services proactively and equitably. Finally, building faith in government involves trust – and trust takes time. It means continuing to show up and work even when it's not election season, even when residents rightfully express distrust, even when it seems like no one is listening. I commit to you and the residents of DC to show up every day.

Many residents feel like their elected officials represent corporations and moneyed interests instead of the flesh and blood people of DC. Thankfully, DC's Fair Elections program has gone a long way toward [addressing undue corporate influence and dark money in local elections](#). By empowering candidates to run on small dollar donations from DC residents, the program allows candidates to focus on meeting with, listening to, and being responsive to DC residents. And public financing in DC works! The [DC Auditor](#) has found that the program has positively impacted increasing candidate

participation; increasing resident engagement and donor diversity; amplifying small donors; stimulating civic participation; and reducing the importance of fundraising in DC elections. Not only does the program reduce corporate influence, it also empowers people of color and women to run competitive races. DC's Fair Elections program has proven so popular that all of the three main Mayoral candidates, as well as the vast majority of current and recent Councilmember candidates have chosen to participate in the program this election cycle. This is a victory for democracy, for DC residents, and for working class families.

The current Council Chair is the only incumbent who has chosen not to participate in the Fair Elections program and instead cozy up to corporate donors. He has already received tens of thousands of dollars of donations directly from businesses, lobbyists, and law firms. These corporate donors and DC residents understand the current Council Chair's message: big checks continue to mean an outsized seat at the table, access to his office, and favorable legislation. It's why we see a current Council Chair who [does not even try to hide when he acts with a direct conflict of interest due to his corporate ties](#). Catering to corporate money is anathema to confidence in local government, and I am committed to showing a different way forward that builds support with DC residents.

Part of rebuilding trust in local government is growing our democracy and making it easier for people to make their voices heard. I support [lowering the voting age to include 16 and 17 year olds and expanding the right to vote to permanent residents](#). Expanding the right to vote to include 16 and 17 year olds – who work, volunteer, and have other so-called adult responsibilities – is a chance to [grow more adult voters](#) and [improve voter turnout](#). Similarly, expanding our democracy to include people who have made permanent homes in DC grows our democracy to include residents who are often on the [frontlines during the pandemic](#), keeping DC's local economy running and supporting essential services, and pay local taxes.

[DC Council proceedings can be more inclusive and accessible](#). Individuals who are most impacted by proposed laws, regulations, and policy should be heard and have easy access to the information needed to engage thoroughly in the legislative process. The Council should constantly work to improve the inclusivity and accessibility of its proceedings, including by using technology to its advantage, to build on lessons learned during the public health emergency and institutionalize best practices. One of my favorite local elected officials in Ward 8 has hosted pop up testimony to hear from residents and record their views – a practice that shows just how much more we can do and more creative we can be in reaching and hearing from residents.

There have been times when I have lost faith in government. It has often felt like families are an afterthought in DC's Covid-19 responses and recovery, and that has hurt me personally. I think there is value in recognizing and connecting with that feeling as a way to have empathy and compassion for those who have lost faith. And there is value in acknowledging that what keeps people going is belief in community and that by supporting each other and trying every day to make our communities stronger we can

make things better. It is a daily practice, and one that I teach my kids and hope to model as DC Council Chairwoman.

5. How would you describe an effective relationship of the Council Chair and other At-Large members with Ward 7?

I am dedicated to building relationships and empowering other Councilmembers, including through improving the process of forming DC Council Committees and assigning Committee chairs and membership to assure neutrality, expertise, and consistency and to avoid the appearance of impropriety. Such improved processes would prevent the Chair from removing specific Councilmembers from specific Committees for their positions on specific issues (e.g., the current Council Chair's decision to [remove the Ward 8 and Ward 1 Councilmembers from the housing committee for proposing reforms to DC's rent control program](#), effectively denying representation east of the Anacostia River on the essential issue of housing). Housing is a critical issue, and unlike our current Chair, I would value and seek the input of the Councilmembers east of the Anacostia River on DC's housing policy.

My [DC Council Accountability Plan](#) also calls for increased use of the Council Office of Racial Equity, including review of the DC budget and Council operations, which would help to determine if Council structures and management are negatively impacting racial equity and ways we can do better. The Plan also proposes governance changes that will improve collaborative and collegial action by the Council as a whole and empower the Council as an institution to better make laws and conduct oversight. These include more nonpartisan, professional support staff for research and Council Committee support.

As representatives for the entire city, the Council Chair and the At-Large Councilmembers owe a duty to work with the Ward Councilmembers and engage with residents across DC. My [DC Council Accountability Plan](#) calls for expanding and coordinating the Council's civic engagement and education efforts to modernize Council notice to residents beyond the DC Register and individual Council office efforts, with a focus on how to reach different communities, including youth and non-English speakers. As Council Chairwoman, I would collaborate across the DC Council to put forward a strategic plan with strategies for how our citywide elected Councilmembers can best work as a group with Ward Councilmembers and engage their communities.

Education

1. Do you believe the per pupil formula is adequate? If so, why? If not, how would you modify the per pupil formula to ensure that all schools are sufficiently funded and facilitate equitable outcomes in communities in Ward 7 and Ward 8?

No, I do not believe the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula is adequate. Not only have we failed to reach adequacy, as defined in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education's [2013 education adequacy study](#), but the Covid-19 pandemic has

exacerbated gaps and increased the baseline of what students and schools need to thrive.

Our leaders have continually failed to be sufficiently ambitious in per pupil funding. The current Chair proposed increasing the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula for next year [at significantly less than the rate of inflation](#) – a de facto cut in funding for our schools. Even the Mayor’s more generous proposed increase does not meet the [rate of inflation](#). After a year of crisis for our students, now is not the time to be stingy with school funding or do the bare minimum, and the current Council Chair is beginning negotiations over the appropriate level of student funding from a position of loss.

In addition to setting a per pupil formula funding goal, the 2013 education adequacy study recommended important processes that we have failed to follow comprehensively that would help us move toward an adequate per pupil formula. Specifically, the study recommended that the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula increase yearly with an inflation index relevant to DC, that it be wholly revisited every five years, and that the Office of the State Superintendent of Education maintain and be responsive to a broad and representative technical working group of advisors on the per pupil formula.

Although the per pupil formula rates were more comprehensively adjusted last fiscal year, we have not holistically considered the formula every five years. While we have maintained a technical working group, the current administration has been significantly unresponsive to the technical working group’s recommendations and the Council is seemingly disinterested, as well.

One of the technical working group’s recommendations is particularly relevant when considering equitable outcomes in Ward 7 and Ward 8. We are far from equity. The technical working group recommended an additional supplemental weight for students facing two or more risk factors. Last year’s adjustments, while an improvement, fall short of this recommendation to move toward a more equitable formula. It is a significant missed opportunity that the DC Council did not sufficiently leverage the robust work of this longstanding group in either oversight or legislation given the administration’s failure to reach both adequacy and equity.

In addition, the DC Council has failed to sufficiently leverage the important work of the Office of the DC Auditor in repeatedly alerting the current Council Chair and others that the administration is violating the law regarding additional funding for at-risk students. By [repeatedly allowing at-risk funding to be used for basic services](#), schools with the highest amount of need will never get additional resources and our children will not get the support they deserve. My [DC Council Accountability Plan](#) calls for increased use of and engagement with the Auditor’s Office.

It is imperative to consider not just the money put into education but also outcomes for students furthest from opportunity. As Council Chairwoman, I will fight for equitable funding and resources for students in Ward 7 and Ward 8 every day – and well before DC Public Schools and other Local Education Agencies decide on final budgets. I will

also monitor a variety of student and school outcomes that families, students, and educators have called attention to for decades. This includes access to and successful completion of advanced courses in middle and high school, graduation, credits, grades, post-secondary applications, enrollment, and persistence. I am dedicated to ensuring that the Office of the State Superintendent of Education follows through on [a DC law](#) to implement a school climate survey for all middle schools and high schools so we can know and intervene when students report feeling unsafe or unhappy. Attendance and behavior are also critical outcomes to follow so we can make sure we are offering support before students become disengaged.

Tracking these outcomes over time will allow us to monitor and meet students and families where they are and ensure needs are met equitably and consistently. We must stay close to and engage with all of these data points – from resources to outcomes – as every single number represents a young person in DC who is worthy of investment and success.

1. What legislative tools would you advance to improve the ability of the Council to recruit and retain quality teachers?

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education recently started sharing more information on teachers across the District's public schools. You can now access teacher retention, experience, and demographic information by school on the Office's website. While this new access gives us a great tool for monitoring and oversight, unfortunately, we do not yet have many years of this data available like in other districts. We can learn from successful ways other jurisdictions have used these tools, however, to encourage recruitment and retention of diverse, representative, and high-quality educators.

For example, researchers at [George Mason used similar data from Fairfax](#), in combination with teacher application data, to find that even after accounting for advanced degrees and experience, white teachers were more likely to be hired than Black teachers. These findings are both painful and unsurprising and yet unexplored and undocumented in the District.

We know what works to recruit and retain teachers – starting with better pay and benefits. The idea that any publicly funded school teacher would struggle to afford to live in DC is a travesty and contributes to high teacher turnover. One critical way to help close this gap is to make it easier for teachers at charter schools to form and join unions. People of color benefit from unions: evidence shows that the union wage premium is [significantly higher for workers of color](#) than white workers.

I've also marched with substitute teachers in DC who deserve to be making significantly more than minimum wage for their commitment to our kids. The importance of substitutes has been emphasized in the Covid-19 pandemic, but they've always been critical to the functioning of our schools. The Mayor [has yet to deliver](#) on her promise for

a full-time substitute teacher in every school, and regrettably the current Chair has not been pushing aggressively to have these critical positions filled.

I also support “Grow Your Own” programs that encourage and support members of our community to study education and enter the profession. These programs should include scholarships to help overcome any financial hardships to entering the profession, include supports for achieving required teacher certifications, and have a strong mentorship component.

As Council Chairwoman, I will ensure that we continue to use both oversight and legislation to monitor the recruitment and retention of educators across our public schools and adjust our practices as needed in response. This could be through oversight or, for example, through legislation that requires detailed plans, to be approved by the DC Council, from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education for making progress on this important work. Importantly, I commit to always including educator voice in these efforts and being responsive to their needs. We will not increase retention without teacher voice as a foundation for this work.

2. How could the Council exercise more effective oversight over DCPS?

There is a lot of room for improvement in effective oversight of DC Public Schools. Timely monitoring and communication between the DC Council and DC Public Schools is lacking, follow up on legislative oversight is almost non-existent, and hearings have been unresponsive to community concern, too late, and not inclusive.

First, I will [reinstate a Committee on Education](#) to ensure consistent and dedicated [oversight of and attention to DC’s public schools](#), including via dedicated Committee staff, particularly in light of persistent oversight challenges related to schools during the Covid-19 public health emergency and [past efforts to establish additional education oversight](#). It is unacceptable that the current Council Chair dissolved the standalone Committee on Education as part of a [petty fight with another Councilmember](#).

It is unacceptable that the District has gone without this capacity for so long and during a pandemic with massive impacts on schools. The current Council Chair cites more education hearings occurring while education has been under the Committee of the Whole than under the former education committee but this is a meaningless and misleading metric. He has held hearings with limited or no public invitation with no clear goals and without hearing from the communities most impacted and with the most need. The current Chair held a [hearing on learning loss](#) with more senior White House Advisors to Donald Trump than DC Public Schools teachers. Why hold a meeting on student attendance or teacher retention without students or teachers?

As Council Chairwoman, I will ensure that education hearings are accessible for educators, families, and students, are relevant and responsive, and include clear and transparent next steps and timelines. I will also ensure regular communication with DC Public Schools at multiple levels and well in advance of important deadlines, such as

school budgets. In sum, I will ensure that education monitoring and oversight is consistent, proactive, and well-staffed so that the DC Council is no longer stuck in a cycle of too little too late.

3. How could the Council exercise more effective oversight over the Public Charter School ecosystem?

Reinstating the Committee on Education will help the DC Council better exercise effective oversight over the entire public school system – both charter schools and traditional public schools. The Council needs the capacity to monitor and oversee activities across all Local Education Agencies, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, the Public Charter School Board, and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education. Importantly, there is no effective oversight of DC Public Schools (one Local Education Agency) without effective oversight over the whole system (including all charter Local Education Agencies). That is simply illogical and, as we have seen, completely unsuccessful. All of our schools work together in an ecosystem and decisions made for one impact the others.

In addition to including – and better tracking and monitoring – all Local Education Agencies through the DC Council's reinstated Committee on Education, the Council also has legislative tools it is not using to better monitor the entire system. For example, the Master Facilities Plan, drafted by the Deputy Mayor for Education's Office, is the planning document for all public school facilities across the District; yet, it has failed to meet legal requirements for many years. The current Council Chair has done absolutely nothing to address this failure. The Master Facilities Plan, if done well, and in accordance with legal requirements, has the potential to ensure an effective use of public school facilities and protect the future health and vitality of all our current schools.

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has asked for [better planning around school facilities](#) – not just for the health of schools but for the safety of children. Our kids deserve to get to school safely and too often schools are located for real estate reasons, not to be accessible or safe. This creates unsafe environments for children in schools – often who have no access to outdoor play space.

Importantly, state education agencies also have responsibilities to the federal government for oversight of all Local Education Agencies and schools in the state. There is a huge opportunity in DC for better oversight over the whole public school system through better oversight of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, our state education agency. Multiple Councilmembers have shown the importance of the Office's role in recent legislation that would adjust the Office's governance in various ways. Regardless of if and how governance changes, these bills show the untapped potential for better oversight of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education and why that is critical for the health of the entire system. There are multiple other DC laws that cover all Local Education Agencies, which provide several ways to do better oversight – from lead free water to attendance to school climate data.

In sum, as Council Chairwoman I will leverage a deep understanding of current DC laws regarding education governance, combined with increased monitoring capacity, to conduct effective oversight of our entire public school system.

Finally, as the mom to three public charter school students, I know that all children in the District's schools deserve real oversight and governance. Transparency is important – around [teacher compensation](#) and policies for [safety and health](#) in particular. I love and trust my children's school leadership and teachers, but [experience has shown](#) that we can't always rely on trust alone for every school and every student – which is why it's so important we engage in oversight as an expression of love and care for every DC student.

4. Are there any intervention programs you believe should be enhanced or expanded? Are there any that should be curtailed or terminated?

There are two important ways to think about where the District can continue to invest in targeted supports and interventions for students. First, there are the supports and interventions in which families and educators have expressed a need for years – like more mental health supports, securing safe passage to school, and improved special education services and intervention. Needs like these have only increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, and we should heed these calls and make these investments, equitably.

The second way to consider these investments is by collecting, monitoring, and adjusting investments based on evidence from schools on the ground. The DC government has been remiss in failing to build an evidence base for our own programs so we can better understand how much and which students are benefiting from various interventions. As DC Council Chairwoman, I will ensure that technical assistance and evaluation of programming is always attached to our most important programs. Not only will this help us make evidence-based decisions, but it will also help us be eligible for more federal grant opportunities that require an evidence base to receive grants. Right now, we are limiting the education, workforce, and postsecondary grants we are eligible for due to an inexcusable lack of local evidence in support of our programming.

We've also been forced to give up critical federal funding that helps us care for students with need. Programs like [AmeriCorps](#) and [Head Start](#) are important. The DC government's failure to follow program rules and meet deadlines occurs with devastating consequences for children – not for leadership.

My [DC Council Accountability Plan](#) includes specific strategies for increasing the capacity of the Council itself to gather and monitor this type of needed evidence. Research and evidence also tends to build on itself, and jurisdictions with a plentiful research base tend to more easily create even more. We need to catch up. Unlike the current Council Chair, I believe the Council itself is a necessary part of that catch up

process. We will simply not create a healthy evidence ecosystem with our legislature lagging behind.

Of course, evidence does not make our decisions for us. Deciding on investments in youth interventions is both a moral and scientific exercise. That is why I started first with a commitment to be responsive to the needs expressed by our communities, in particular historically underserved communities including those east of the Anacostia River. And I will follow up on these needs by gathering evidence so we are eligible for more funds and more support for our children and families furthest from opportunity.

Economic Development and Housing

1. Ward 7 hosts a disproportionately high percentage of vacant and dilapidated buildings and vacant lots. How would you address this issue without inadvertently depriving middle income families of a rare asset?

As DC Council Chairwoman, I would work to reduce the racial wealth-gap in the District, expand targeted homebuyer assistance programs, and provide financial assistance to families that are facing difficulties maintaining their properties so that fewer family-owned properties become dilapidated and/or vacant in the first place.

I have consistently supported Ward 5 Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie's Baby Bonds legislation; monthly payments to low-income families who qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (funded via the recent tax increase on very high-income individuals that I supported); and efforts to raise wages (including the subminimum wage for tipped workers). The District can do more to expand and target homebuyer assistance programs so that middle-income families in Ward 7 are recipients of the benefits that come with home ownership.

DC can also expand existing programs like the [Weatherization Assistance Program](#) and the [Single Family Residential Rehabilitation Program](#), as well as devise [new programs to assist homeowners in the maintenance and retention of their homes](#). My [DC Council Accountability Plan](#) proposes reinstating a [comprehensive, nonpartisan, and objective research service](#) to assist the Council in crafting legislative solutions to DC's challenges, including robust consideration of best practices across jurisdictions, and help the Council better target public funds toward evidence-based programs, both of which would be essential toward new programs to assist homeowners.

For properties that are already vacant and blighted, and where the owner is unresponsive, unable to be found, or uninterested in maintaining their property, the District Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs must improve its system of tracking vacant properties and taking proactive steps to appropriately tax them. This is an issue our current Council Chair has talked a lot about over the years, but unfortunately there has been little, if any, improvement. Ensuring that the vacant taxes are appropriately levied and collected will generate more revenue for the District that

can then be reinvested back into communities – particularly communities east of the Anacostia River.

Finally, tenants in all eight Wards are entitled to live in safe, habitable conditions. My [Safe Housing Action Plan](#) lays out the ways I intend to make this a reality by reforming the District Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs and holding the agency accountable. This includes requiring the Department to hire and properly train more inspectors and adopt a robust proactive inspection program and requiring repairs for housing code violations, both as a mechanism to improve safety and to prevent the continued neglect and decline of specific properties that [ultimately results in them being uninhabitable](#). District residents deserve safe housing and a government that proactively protects tenants through a public health and racial equity lens. The proposals I outline in my Plan will strengthen our regulation of safe housing by detecting, fixing, and preventing housing code violations, as well as preventing the degradation of buildings that results in demolition or sale and displacement of neighbors.

2. The DC Housing Authority and its Board faced significant challenges in 2021. What changes, if any, are needed to sustain and increase affordable and public housing in DC? Are there any decisions on the allocation of affordable units that deserve closer scrutiny?

The DC Housing Authority could not have a more important mission: to safely and stably house low-income DC residents. Unfortunately, the agency and its Board of Commissioners has been plagued by mismanagement and mission drift, all of which has gone unchecked by the DC Council and the current Chair. The results are devastating, with families living in unsafe and uninhabitable conditions and tenants being displaced from their homes and neighborhoods while properties sit vacant for years. Current public housing tenants and DC residents who have been waiting decades for affordable housing deserve a functioning housing agency. As Chairwoman, I will lead the Council in fully funding public housing repairs while ensuring that the DC Housing Authority is acting ethically, responsibly, and in service of low-income DC residents. In short, I will make putting the DC Housing Authority on the right course a top priority.

First, I will ensure that the DC Housing Authority has consistent, reliable, and sufficient funding to rehabilitate and maintain its public housing stock. The federal government has been cutting funding to public housing for decades, and unfortunately the local government did not step up to fill in that gap. While the DC Council has recently allocated some money toward public housing repairs, the funding is not consistent or recurring, which means that the Housing Authority cannot plan ahead for big projects and desperately needed investments. As Chairwoman, I will work with the Housing Authority to determine how much money it needs to rehabilitate and repair its public housing stock, and ensure that the agency has a consistent and recurring stream of funding that it can rely on each year to meet that need.

Second, we know that a lack of funding is not the only problem at the DC Housing Authority. As Chairwoman, I will ensure that the DC Council's Housing Committee is dedicated to and has the resources necessary to conduct rigorous oversight of the Housing Authority. If we are going to make a substantial investment into the Housing Authority, which we must, we must also ensure that it uses that money optimally to best serve residents and meaningfully improve the condition of its properties. This also includes bringing more vacant units back online so residents – many of whom are sitting on a waitlist with 30,000 other families for years and years – can obtain the affordable housing they need and deserve.

Third, given the neverending scandal and mismanagement at the DC Housing Authority, it is clear the DC Council needs to step in and legislate improvements to the agency's Board of Commissioners. The Board needs to be reconstituted, breaking the Mayor's majority, so that the agency can operate in a truly independent manner as intended. The Commissioners should be required to have the experience (professional and/or lived) and knowledge necessary to oversee the Housing Authority's valuable public housing stock and meet the needs of its residents. And, most importantly, all Board members must be committed to ensuring that the agency is furthering its central mission of safely housing DC residents living between 0 and 30 percent Area Median Income.

As to the second part of this question, there are indeed decisions about the allocation of affordable housing units that deserve closer scrutiny than the current Chair has given them. As Chairwoman, I will closely scrutinize deals that involve the disposition of public land, ensuring that deeply affordable housing and family-sized units are maximized on those valuable sites. Anything less is a lost opportunity to meaningfully grow our affordable housing stock. I will work to ensure that affordable housing is built in all eight Wards, including the District's wealthiest wards.

And, for every affordable housing development project that comes through the DC Council, I will ask myself "affordable for who?" This question could not be more crucial in the District where the median household income of Black residents is \$49,652, while the median income for white residents is \$149,734. In 2013, DC received the unfortunate title as the city with the highest intensity of gentrification in the country, with over 20,000 Black residents displaced from their neighborhoods. As Chairwoman, I will work diligently to right those wrongs and stem the tide of displacement.

My belief in and dedication to affordable housing is personal. My biological father died on the street while homeless. It's a constant reminder that there is no reason, no excuse, and no justification for not taking every step we can to provide safe, stable, and secure housing for everyone.

Transportation

1. Ward 7 residents and many residents east of the Anacostia River complain about inconsistent access to public transportation. These conditions have been intensified by WMATA's reduced service schedule over the last two years. How would you improve

access to transportation for underserved communities during the pandemic? What legislative or oversight steps would you take under normal circumstances to improve transportation equity?

Transportation inequity has plagued DC for too long. Every map of our city looks the same because of a racist pattern of systemic disinvestment in our communities east of the Anacostia River, and [transportation is no exception](#). Despite having some of the lowest rates of car ownership in our city, east of the Anacostia River neighborhoods are dramatically underserved by transit.

As a non-driver, I know how essential transit is and I've been through every Ward by public transportation. I've experienced the challenges from infrequent and unreliable trains and buses, which makes it more difficult to get to school and work, to grocery shop (particularly given DC's food deserts), and to get to appointments. The lack of high-quality public transportation is not just an economic justice issue, but an environmental justice one as cars and trucks and highways bring higher volumes of pollutants into communities with the [highest rates of childhood asthma](#) in DC. We also know that the majority of deaths and serious injuries from high volumes of car traffic occur among our neighbors east of the Anacostia River.

We have to focus our efforts on improving our transit systems and ensuring they deliver equitably. That means rigorous analysis of the District Department of Transportation's plans to ensure that they deliver separated bus facilities east of the Anacostia River to ensure that all residents have access to high-quality transit – even if they don't live by a train station. We have to explore more ways to ensure frequent, easy bus service – like subsidizing pilots for off-board fare collection, fare free routes, and all-door boarding.

Our oversight of Metro is critically important. Yet, our current Chair allowed Metro to languish with Jack Evans as his Board appointee, who was disinterested in Metro improvements for a half-decade and ultimately kicked off the Board for [his corruption](#). In addition, I believe Metro should – and [have asked](#) Metro to seek – the full three percent subsidy increase from every jurisdiction every year. In the current context, the idea that Metro is leaving money on the table by not asking for the limited subsidy increases that jurisdictions have already essentially agreed to is beyond comprehension.

I'm also a strong supporter of Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen's [Metro for DC](#) proposal to reinvest in DC bus service where it is most needed and provide access to free transit. In addition, I have led Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B – where I serve as a Commissioner – in [advocating](#) for lowering barriers to the Kids Ride Free program to ensure everyone has better access to free transit.

2. What is your position on the potential expansion of the DC Streetcar along Benning Road? If you believe it is a net positive initiative, please explain the potential benefits. If you believe it is a net negative, please describe the potential risks.

I'm a strong supporter of high-quality transit in all DC neighborhoods. I support expanding the DC Streetcar along Benning Road, but I believe the service provided must be frequent, reliable, fast, and cheap. And we know there have been historic challenges with the DC Streetcar.

The DC Streetcar's main failure has been one of political will and commitment. Because of an inability to dedicate a right-of-way to the operation of the streetcar, it is essentially a failed project. What was once the opening leg of a citywide network of dedicated, fast, modern transit is now an orphaned novelty. It's a true loss. I would insist that any transit plan for Benning Road deliver high-quality transit in a dedicated right-of-way.

I will also note past DC budget debates that have pitted funding for the DC Streetcar against funding for public housing. We are a city rich in resources, with yearly surpluses of hundreds of millions of dollars. I resent a framing that pits basic needs against each other. We can and must meet both housing needs and public transportation needs.

Public Safety

1. The District of Columbia is experiencing a general decline in crime, but a spike in murder. What would you identify as the core causes of this spike and what legislative tools would you suggest that could stop the increase and address the root causes?

While there is no single factor that has led to an increase in homicides, we know the safest communities are the ones with the most resources and not the ones with the most police or prisons. As long as people's basic needs remain unmet – things like healthy food, secure and stable housing, high-quality healthcare and economic security through education and employment – our city will not be safe. Stopping the rise in homicides will require sustained, intentional investments in violence prevention and social safety net supports in communities that have faced longstanding disinvestment.

Consistent with [national priorities and best practices](#), I am dedicated to investing in violence prevention and building strong communities to reduce violence and lessen its impacts. I strongly support and have consistently advocated for increased resources for and coordination of violence interruption efforts, which receive a small fraction of the funding provided to police. I'm committed through [DC Council oversight](#) to streamlining and coordinating separate efforts, as well as using data to inform our violence interruption efforts. This is especially important since violence interruption programs reside within several agencies and violence interruption work is often performed by contracted and subcontracted entities.

Supporting our communities most impacted by gun violence and investing in violence prevention also includes robust trauma-informed services, especially for our children, young adults, and communities impacted by violence to help heal the deep wounds in our communities. We must rapidly expand programs such as the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement's Pathways Program and the Summer Youth Employment Program to provide individuals with real alternatives to violence. We must

target resources toward the neighborhoods experiencing the highest rates of violence and the small number of individuals involved with violence. And we must use oversight to ensure that our diverse programs are coordinated and work well together, and double-down on the most successful among them.

I strongly support and have consistently advocated for strengthening our social safety net and meeting people's needs as violence prevention. We know that stable and secure communities are safe communities, and that the root of violence is – at least in part – decades of chronic disinvestment in communities east of the Anacostia River. We must ensure that all DC residents have safe, stable, and secure housing by ending chronic homelessness through providing permanent supportive housing, supporting tenants and homeowners who face a challenge or unexpected financial crisis, and by preserving and creating substantially more deeply affordable housing. We must expand food access through increased local funding for programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Produce Plus, and Produce Rx, and through targeted incentives for grocery stores that are specific to neighborhoods and subject to vigorous oversight. And we must provide individuals with economic security and opportunities for upward economic mobility by ensuring that there are high-quality neighborhood schools in every part of our city, investing more in workforce development and job training programs, and creating pathways to careers that provide individuals with a livable wage.

Ultimately, as Council Chairwoman, I will ensure that there is a coordinated effort with communities and individuals most impacted by violence, as well as local and federal partners, to ensure we are effectively using every tool in our toolbox to stop the increase in homicides and address the root causes of violence – so that everyone in our city is safe.

2. What would you recommend that the Committee on Public Safety and Justice do to improve oversight over MPD?

I strongly believe in holding the Metropolitan Police Department accountable, including by moving forward the Police Reform Commission's thorough, sensible, and data-supported recommendations.

One of the most important areas for improvement is police accountability, and I am uniquely equipped to tackle that challenge. Recent reporting highlighted the failures of MPD accountability in the MPD's Disciplinary Review Division's [weakening of disciplinary action](#) for officers with disciplinary records for domestic violence, DUIs, indecent exposure, sexual solicitation, stalking, and more. This reporting emphasized a systemic issue: sexual misconduct by MPD officers. Research on police sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, extortion, and forcible rape by officers) overwhelmingly concludes that it is a systemic problem. Research also demonstrates that police officers target women they do not think would be believed if they came forward, including women of color, transgender women, women who use drugs or alcohol, and women involved in the sex trade. Furthermore, domestic violence rates are

high for police officers. Despite national guidance calling for policies prohibiting sexual misconduct by officers, most police departments have no policies or training making it clear that sexual misconduct against civilians is prohibited. In DC, we have seen this [borne out within MPD's Human Trafficking Unit in particular](#).

As someone who has experienced domestic violence in the home and sexual harassment in the workplace, and as someone who has worked professionally toward workplace accountability for sexual misconduct, I am intimately familiar with the importance of accountability and need for systemic change. External oversight is a best practice with regard to workplace misconduct, and I strongly support and would immediately act to create a deputy auditor for public safety within the District of Columbia Auditor. While the position is slated to be filled, it also must be taken seriously, and [not ignored](#) like much of the work and recommendations of the Auditor's Office more broadly, and the Council must be prepared to engage with and act in response to the recommendations put forward. (My [DC Council Accountability Plan](#) calls for increased use of the Auditor's Office, too.) I also support enhancing the authority of the Office of Police Complaints to include identification of complaints by the Office (and not just consideration of complaints filed). Complaint identification authority is crucial where victims of police misconduct face a severe power disparity and may not come forward.

It often seems that the DC Council commissions task forces to complete reports as a way to kick the can down the road, with no action. We have gone nearly a year without significant action on the Police Reform Commission's thorough, sensible, and data-supported recommendations. I commit to values-driven, timely leadership and action.

3. What programs would you create or modify to reduce recidivism and reintegrate Returning Citizens into our communities?

I strongly believe in humane policies that promote rehabilitation and set our returning citizens on a path for success, rather than the current punitive system that results in high recidivism rates.

We know that the best way to reduce recidivism and support returning citizens is to ensure that they remain part of their local communities. That is why I support investing in and expanding the Office of the Attorney General's successful Restorative Justice and Diversion Programs and decriminalizing various offenses in favor community-based treatment programs.

For individuals not eligible for those programs, we know the further individuals are from their communities and support networks, the worse off they typically are. Despite the Federal Bureau of Prisons' policy to prioritize individuals close to release to participate in programming, very few DC residents have participated in any of this programming. That is why I support transferring people as soon as space is available back to the District's Department of Corrections to ensure that they stay connected with their support networks and so that DC can ensure they are participating in trauma-informed

treatment and traditional or vocational education programs. I believe that we have a duty to ensure that every returning citizen is working with mentors and their support networks to develop a comprehensive reentry plan prior to the end of their sentence to ensure that they can be successful upon reentry.

Finally, we know that there are countless barriers preventing our returning citizens from being successful when they attempt to reintegrate in the community. I support passing criminal record sealing and expungement legislation, such as At-Large Councilmember Christina Henderson's [RESTORE Act](#), to help make it easier on our returning citizens to find employment and housing. I support empowering returning citizens to start and run their own businesses, including expansion of programs such as Georgetown University's Pivot Program. I would expand peer support and mentoring opportunities for returning citizens at community-based organizations and government agencies. And I would increase Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants funding to support community-based reentry services, expand the use of the housing-first model among reentry housing providers, and ensure immediate connections to high-quality behavioral health services upon re-entry.

As Council Chairwoman, I would take steps to ensure that fewer of our neighbors enter into the often traumatizing and harmful carceral system, ensure that those currently in the carceral system are in the care of our local DC agencies and organizations so that they can receive and supports they need to be successful upon re-entry, and eliminate barriers that returning citizens face upon re-entry while providing supports and resources they need to be successful.

Jobs and Employment

1. What legislative tools would you create or modify to increase the percentage of District employees that reside in the District of Columbia?

It's critical that we intently and diligently work to make our government workforce an integral part of the communities we serve. That work includes efforts to make DC government jobs better and more accessible to community members, to make housing more affordable, and to recruit and retain local residents into DC government jobs.

We must remove unnecessary barriers to government employment. That includes ensuring that job requirements do not exceed those needed to perform the job so that jobs are available to a broad range of job seekers. Our background check process should allow for the employment of people with different legal statuses – including recipients of deferred action and temporary protected status – and we should take steps so that we aren't limiting access to jobs for returning citizens by requiring more aggressive background checks for positions that don't require them. We should partner with community based organizations and labor unions to ensure we're recruiting heavily in communities we serve.

I have proposed dramatic efforts to make housing more affordable for all DC residents, which would enable more District government employees to build a future in the city they serve. Oversight is essential to ensure housing affordability to make sure money is spent well, agencies follow laws and regulations, and we are achieving our goals. The absence of rigorous oversight has led to the Housing Production Trust Fund – one of our primary affordable housing tools – to continuously fail to meet the requirements to fund housing for those most in need. We've regularly lost federal grants because we don't spend wisely. Tens of thousands of residents are waiting for public housing as the waitlist sits stagnant. We can and must do oversight better, and [I have a plan for that](#).

I'm supportive of efforts to "Grow Your Own" next generation of civil servants in DC. For older participants in the Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program, I would like to see fellowship-style offers where successful young people could immediately continue in employment in District government positions – turning summer work into permanent work much like the federal government does with Honors Programs for attorneys. The recent announcement of the DC Futures Scholarship for students in high-demand fields is laudable, but it contains no efforts to encourage these students to bring their talents to our civil service. That is a disappointing missed opportunity. I would like to see efforts to target these populations of DC residents to join our civil service.

We also have to ensure DC government jobs support living in DC and too many do not. Thirty-five DC charter schools pay wages for teachers that are [not livable in DC](#) – forcing teachers to be independently wealthy or live outside the District. I [support the efforts of labor](#) to ensure that our government is a desirable employer, not an employer of last resort.

Finally, our friends and neighbors should be able to see themselves in every level of DC government. My [DC Council Accountability Plan](#) proposes implementing a "Rooney Rule" to ensure that we interview members of underrepresented communities for Council positions and appointments to ensure that candidates from diverse backgrounds get a fair shot at high profile jobs.

2. The unemployment rate in Ward 7 is 14%. What legislative tools would you create or modify to improve the ability of the District to restore these residents to the workforce?

Our city should work for all of us, not just those who bundle campaign donations or hire lobbyists. Yet we've watched as small, local businesses and working class people struggle and are pushed out of DC due to growing economic inequality and a high cost of living. We know income inequality impacts Black and Hispanic Washingtonians most starkly, including in Ward 7.

I believe every person in DC deserves a good job. Investing more in the University of the District of Columbia – DC's only public historically Black university – and job training programs will create greater opportunities for more people. Our local government can ensure jobs with good wages, paid leave when it's needed, and access to healthcare. The ability to find a job and earn a living wage should exist for all DC residents,

regardless of immigration status. I have worked throughout my career for safe workplaces free from discrimination and harassment, and the right to speak out when things go wrong without fear of retribution, and I will continue to do so as Chairwoman.

Small businesses are the heart of our neighborhoods. But they need more support targeted to their specific needs. That means focusing our tax incentives on small businesses rather than big developers and multinational corporations. I know firsthand how effective a good Main Streets program can be, including supporting homegrown Black businesses, but not all neighborhoods benefit equally, so I'll fight for equitable funding.

I continue to be concerned that, due to a lack of oversight and attention, subsidies intended to help communities most in need get misdirected to large campaign donors of the Mayor and Council Chair. For instance, tax subsidies intended to provide grocery stores and good jobs to communities east of the Anacostia River are currently being used to build a Wegmans in Ward 3 and a Whole Foods in Ward 4. The current Chair has never expressed interest in reforming this program. In Ward 5, a maxed-out donor to the Chair and ally of Donald Trump [is using a federal block grant to build a largely market-rate development](#) with a loan guarantee meant to provide affordable housing to communities in need.

Good union jobs are also family-supporting jobs in our communities. We know that having a [union closes wage gaps](#) based on race and gender and provides stability to working families. I'll work to make it easier to form and join unions so that workers in DC get not just jobs, but good jobs. I'll insist on high standards for government contractors and ensure that our subsidies and support aren't going to low-road exploitative employers.

The current Chair keeps taking the side of big businesses and lobbyists over people – leading efforts to overturn the will of DC voters who demanded higher wages for our neighbors, fighting against an expanded tax credit for everyday workers, and rubber-stamping subsidies for connected developers. It's time for new leadership, and I will stand up for DC's workers and our local small businesses.