

Stuart Anderson, is a native Washingtonian, loving father and grandfather. With the slogan, "**One Aim One Mission One Ward**," Stuart seeks to diligently represent and empower all the residents of Ward 8.

Formerly the Community Engagement Specialist for the Anacostia Coordinating Council (ACC), Stuart is the founding Executive Director of Family & Friends of Incarcerated People (FFOIP). Co-founder and Campaign Manager for Don't Mute My Health, as well as Marketing Manager for Day Eight, and for The Essential Theatre. He is the co-chair and logistical coordinator for the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Walk and Parade.

He is a graduate of the University of the District of Columbia, with a bachelors in Urban Studies; and, minor degrees in legal assistance and business management. Stuart is the Ward 8 committeeman on the DC Democratic State Committee. He is also the vice-president of the Friends of Parkland-Turner Neighborhood Library.

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Stuart is currently employed with SEACAP (Social Emotional and Academic success for Children And Parents) as the family engagement and support specialist and a member of the [Early Childhood Innovation Network](#) (ECIN).

Introductory Questions

1. What office are you seeking, and why did you decide to run for that office? If (re) elected, what are your priority areas of focus?

I am seeking the Ward 8 council member seat. I decided to seek the office because I believe that I can serve my neighbors in a more efficient manner. I first sought the office when Marion S. Barry passed away. I have continued to watch and serve from that time until now. Government can improve the living conditions of people when representatives

in our communities fulfill their obligations as servants. I can help ensure that the residents of Ward 8, my neighbors, can experience a better quality of life.

Budget

2. Do you consider the District's total current budget to be too large, too small, or about right? Please explain.

The budget is too small/

3. With unemployment, homelessness, and general economic distress at high levels, do you envision increasing safety net spending in future budgets? If so, which areas would you seek to expand?

We are currently in a moment where the future liquidity of the District funding stream will be strained for some time. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a severe drain on the surplus that we were sitting on. Our city has no idea today how long this epidemic will last or what the overall cost will be. We will have to plan as we manage this crisis and place contingencies in place with several projected outcomes. Homelessness was

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already an issue that our current leadership had not prioritized. Unemployment - which is climbing to unheard of levels - and the general economic distress caused by the coronavirus has our city where we have never been before. As a result, sound governmental action must not be passive. We will have to increase safety net spending in the short term. There are a lot of factors to be considered yet aid to families to help them meet daily basic needs would be high on my short list. Shifting more spending in testing and prevention from the virus would also rank high on my list.

4. With the COVID-19 outbreak causing an economic downturn and stress on state and local budgets, would you support raising taxes to maintain current spending levels? If so, how should new revenue sources be targeted?

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, I would not consider raising taxes as a way of addressing the effects of the pandemic. People can't pay their rents/mortgages/utilities; their bills are piling up on them; and they can't go to work. How would people pay if they aren't earning. It would not be new revenue sources that I would target, it would be reallocating funding.

Transportation, Housing and Infrastructure

5. More than a third of DC residents do not own cars and automobile traffic significantly contributes to climate change. If elected, how will you work to improve public transportation in the District?

Yes, automobiles are the highest carbon-emitting sources and by reducing the cost of public transportation people will tend to use their private vehicles less. I will present and push legislation to encourage more citizens to use public transportation. To do this we will have to ensure that public transportation is safe, timely and efficient.

By removing on-street parking for dedicated infrastructure changes. As a result of the traffic congestion on the east side of the North bound lane, in the 1900

the right to park. Still I would require more study in this regard Ward wide.

While supporting increased protections for pedestrians, I would have the city invest in greater clarity in the signage throughout the city around parking and other directional signage.

Finally I would look into the Vision Zero Enhancement Omnibus Amendment Act, which to see what other provisions I would support which would serve to both improve public transportation and my position on enacting muni reduce speed limits, ban right turns on red, and incrcipal climate policies.

6. Other global cities are working to increase nearby access to amenities for all residents. For example, Paris recently announced a plan to become a “15-minute city” with grocery stores and other destinations located within a short walk of every home. What will you do to eliminate food deserts and improve local options throughout the District?

Once elected, my team and I will focus on the development of a strategic plan to identify possible locations for at least four new locations within Ward 8 for grocery stores. I would urge that developers to build into their planned development the infrastructure to accommodate grocery stores. I will work very hard to encourage grocery store chains to come and do business in Ward 8. We have seen little progress since the Grocery Walk (2017) which was designed to highlight the lack of food access. I would work with elected officials in Ward 7 to support whatever plan is developed for their residents. Incentivising grocery stores to come into the Ward will be the key to addressing the food deserts.

7. As of 2019, there were 6,500 people in the District experiencing homelessness and the economic impact of COVID-19 will place a strain on thousands more. How do you plan on decreasing homelessness in a sustainable way?

The District is sitting on vacant property which I will have my legal team look at what remedies we can leverage to expedite the use of the residential property to absorb

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some of our homeless population. Passing legislation to suspend rent and mortgage payments for a period of time. Giving a subsistence to each household to keep people going through this trying time. **As the crisis continues, tenants will continue to fall behind on their rent and accrue increased debt. Were I on the council now, I would draft and submit new legislation which would protect tenants from evictions for at least 6 months following the reopen designated date. I would recommend that for those experiencing undue hardship that landlords adjust peoples' rents by adding the owed rent evenly across the next 6 months. Everyone must be protected. We also need to look into transitional housing for Returning Citizens.**

8. If (re) elected, what will you do to create and protect affordable housing for both home-buyers and renters?

I support the Reclaim Rent Control coalition's [platform](#) in its entirety. The following are ideas I was looking at before the Covid-19 crisis to help residents who are negatively impacted by rising rents:

Request the Mayor's office to consider implementing periodic special AMI rates lower than 30% as a way of helping people remain in the city - which is something like a lottery of sorts;

Offer tax incentives to landlords who are willing to suspend rent increases for a period of up to 5 years on new tenants; and

Implement legislation that enables a tenant to reject increased rents if unable to pay and remain in the property for up to 2 years at the current rent amount after the expiration of their initial lease term or after last rental increase, whichever is applicable.

I want to look into legislation to construct moderately-priced, low-rise homes and

complement DC's investment in affordable housing production. I support the plan to create 36,000 additional housing units across the District, just disagree with the time table. We can do it within a shorter period of time, to absorb more of our currently homeless.

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9. Revitalization in DC has created an increase in commercial and residential development. Though this revitalization is beneficial to the District, certain areas are not experiencing it at the same rate as other neighborhoods. What are your plans to ensure that all of DC benefits from periods of economic growth?

As opposed to fighting against commercial and residential development, in Ward 8 I plan to work with the elected leadership (ANCs, Civic Asso., and other community organizations) to ensure that my neighbors benefit from the economic growth by making sure that it comes into our Ward. I will work arduously to ensure that our leadership has input in every step of the process of shaping the revitalization. Today our most pressing goal will be strategizing how we get back to a sense of normalcy. We have to develop our plan for stabilizing our communities. This will be one of my first areas of concern.

10. Which recently revitalized DC neighborhood would you suggest as the best model for the city as a whole, and why?

Ideally revitalization programs should provide services and funding to help **retail** corridors and strengthen our **neighborhoods** to improve the quality of life for everyone living in the general area, if not the whole Ward. Often-times the goal is missed. Life-long people who reside in or about the revitalized area are displaced; and, small businesses don't survive the process. The small and local retailers found in clusters along traditional commercial corridors struggle to stay in business while the revitalization is happening and can't afford to stay in many cases. If I had to choose from what I have seen, the H. street revitalized commercial strip would be a good model - though it isn't quite up to its potential yet.

Educatio

n

11. Do you think reform in the DC public schools is headed in the right direction? Explain your answer.

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No because the nature of reform is to put in place changes that improve the object of reform. Since the governance change in 2007 we have made minimal improvements. Test scores have not significantly increased nor have we moved the needle on closing the achievement gap. We essentially have a three sector system competing against itself - DCPS East of the river, DCPS west of the park and Charter LEA's. All under a chancellor and OSSE who aren't on the same page. We have some great teachers who want to teach, and students who really want to learn. We have to deal with the top down approach to education, and place some trauma informed personnel in our troubled schools. Also there are too many education insiders that subscribe to the principals of the "Education Industrial Complex". Control over DCPS is an issue that needs to be looked at and corrected.

12. How do you suggest that we repurpose school properties that have been closed over the past few years?

First, the student census numbers have increased significantly and fallen similarly in past decades. I think it wise to not divest the system of school buildings without first

giving thoughtful consideration and strategic planning for future needs. Second, any such repurposing of a school should be determined by input from and of great weight given to the affected community. And third, all repurposed buildings should always be used for the public good - one which enhances and strengthens the neighborhood.

Recreation/community centers serving both our youth and senior population.

13. How will you ensure equitable Special Education allocations across the city?

First we need to put in place the resources and mechanisms to ensure that IEP's are created for all that are in need, based on the merits of each individual situation and then maintain fidelity to them once in place. There should be consequences for neglect or malfeasance. We need to establish offerings within DCPS or the city at-large to reduce the number of students that have to access external settings, too many of which are outside of the District. This will require a comprehensive evaluation of our current

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capacity compared to the current and anticipated future needs of students requiring access.

14. What accountability measures can you put into place to ensure that schools are staffed appropriately? What significant, unique policies would you put into place that would drastically increase the support and retention of teachers and administrators in DCPS?

First, accountability measures should be put in place by a local school board. The DC Council should not be in the position of being the defacto school board. That said, given where we currently find ourselves, I would want to put in place legislation that builds on the concept of "at risk funding" by including language that creates exemptions from the comprehensive staffing model in schools with the greatest needs. To date, according to DCPS the model includes a number of factors, one of which is the number of students enrolled. However, it does not account for the specific needs and numbers of "at risk"

students. Focusing adequate staffing, funding and programmatic offerings to this demographic would significantly increase achievement and thereby decreasing the seemingly intractable gap.

To support and retain teachers requires a commitment to valuing those charged with the academic development of the youth who represent the future of our country. We can begin by adopting reasonable measures for teachers and move away from narrow high stakes testing such as PARCC that do not accurately assess teacher effectiveness and stifle creative pedagogy. Recognize that each school is unique and therefore give administrators and teachers more autonomy while holding them accountable for results. Ensure adequate time for collaboration, planning and meaningful professional development based on specific needs. There are a number of other actions that I would like to see taken but I'll just amplify this one. Put in place incentives that focus on attracting and preparing current DCPS students to become teachers in the system that they benefited from. In other words, develop home grown talent that is already vested in the success of the schools in the city.

Criminal Justice

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15. Describe one aspect of an effective safety plan that would lower crime rates in DC without infringing on the constitutional rights of DC residents.

16. How would improve reentry programs for returning citizens to ensure they are connected to gainful employment, education, and their families?

A plan to roll back The **National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997**, also known as the Revitalization Act (enacted on **August 5,**

1997, with provisions to reform the criminal justice system in Washington, D.C.) would be ideal. One of the best ways to improve reentry programs is to bring prisoners back to the DC area as soon as possible. By having our prisoners here in the city we could do a better job of helping to get them ready for reentry. Reentry should begin before a prisoner is released, at a minimum of 18 to 24 months prior. It would be counterproductive to expect returning persons to become gainfully employed where we have not provided avenues for them to pick up local or emerging technical skills. For legislators

Wages and Labor

17. What initiatives would you propose to ensure that minority- and woman-owned business enterprises are able to compete for projects, particularly District construction and development?

To create income equality, I would develop a **Next Level** approach. The Next Level approach will seek to open up the doors of opportunity across the City for M/W/DBEs. Broadening the pool of talented developers in the City's pipeline will be a significant step towards a strong and equitable economy.

This effort will bring us closer to that goal and demonstrates our commitment to helping emerging firms participate in the City's development now and into the future.

The **Next Level** approach will provide minority and women business owners with access to professional networks, a growth strategy, capital and contracts, Through this

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collaboration, we aim to ensure support for a diverse set of entrepreneurs and drive positive economic growth in our communities.

Access to capital is one of the biggest hurdles that M/W/DBEs face. DC is home to some of the most innovative companies in the world, many of which have faced

historical barriers to opportunity in a city rich with economic potential.

It is particularly important that governments advance meaningful efforts for M/W/DBE firms to grow and bid for contracts, particularly in the construction industry.

Providing new opportunities to our city's M/W/DBE firms helps support developing businesses by ensuring greater equity to publicly financed projects,

taken additional steps to further integrate minority, women-owned and disadvantaged business enterprises within the procurement process from start to finish. As our city's primary engine for economic development. We must ensure that we work diligently to increase the participation of enterprises who reflect our diverse population as we build and strengthen our city's infrastructure.

The plan to build the capacity of minority, women-owned and disadvantaged business enterprises will set new standards of innovation in MWBE programming, going far beyond setting aspirational goals to truly responding to the real challenges MWBE firms experience and share.

Government Accountability

18. Do you believe that the current DC Council represents the interests of the broad public? If not, what segments of the public are underrepresented?

19. How will you demonstrate accessibility and responsiveness to your constituents?

I plan to demonstrate accessibility by being present and open to hearing out constituents who reach out with concerns. I will also have periodic open door periods where constituents may stop by to sit for 5 to 10 minutes.

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My responsiveness to my constituents will be direct, straight forward, and empathetic to their concerns.

20. This is the first campaign cycle conducted with the Fair Elections Program, which provides public financing for candidates who adhere to small-dollar contribution limits. Do you believe that a candidate who is not participating in this program can adequately represent the views of all residents of the District?

I think that traditional campaigning will render the same type of pay to play legislators that we have been getting over the years. I believe that a candidate who takes corporate money will represent those interests more so than not.

21. Other suggested campaign reforms include ranked-choice voting and lowering the voting age to 16. What changes would you support to ensure that our elections truly represent the will of the people?

Rank choice voting seems to be a bit confusing in the application, but I would support campaign reform which includes lowering the voting age to 16. I would also support a term limit initiative.

Ward-Specific Questions

22. (Ward 2 Candidates Only) Will you commit to supporting the winner of the Democratic primary in the June 16 special election and/or the general election in November? Why or why not?

23. (Ward 4 Candidates Only) Councilmembers often have to strike a balance between supporting the mayor's priorities and providing independent representation for their constituents. How does your vision for Ward 4 differ from Mayor Bowser?

24. (Ward 7 Candidates Only) Do you support extending the streetcar on H Street east to Benning Road Metro? How would you work to ensure that projects like this provide connections with the rest of the city while limiting displacement among current Ward 7 residents?

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25. (Ward 8 Candidates Only) Given Ward 8 still exists within a food desert, with a lack of healthcare facilities, what are your plans to bring sustainable services and retail partners to the community moving forward?

These are my top priorities for our ward! The health care agenda for me includes fighting for a state of the arts hospital that has level two trauma capabilities. These services include (but are not limited to):

As it relates to the food desert, we must expedite pulling grocery stores into our Ward! It is unconscionable that there is only one store in Ward 8. It must be made a priority on everyone's agenda to do everything that can be done to get more providers in the Ward. My plan is to give greater incentives to providers, to support novel approaches, and to roll out a plan that would call for developers to plan to have the infrastructure for grocery stores in their designs for new construction, which could support such a planned development.

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