



DC Young Democrats
2020 Candidate Questionnaire

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 re-election to the position of United States Senator for Washington D.C. My priority for the District has always been achievement of D.C Statehood, as it is the only way for my constituents to be equal citizens of the United States, and have the representation we have always been promised.

Budget

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

Because the 2021 Budget is subject to dramatic revision due to the Covid-19 Emergency, I want to reserve comment until I have had the opportunity to review the Mayor's new submission in greater detail.

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?

Safety net spending is always an area which calls for more monetary support, and we should put all resources that we can into alleviating homelessness, unemployment, and other prevalent issues. The areas which need to be expanded depend on the current situation, and need to be tailored to the groups which need the assistance. Certainly assistance for those impacted most directly by the virus should be prioritized.



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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?

We can't take new sources of revenue off the table, but we must be targeted to make sure we are helping and not hurting those vulnerable members of our community.

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?

The improvement of public transportation, as many things do, rests on the ability to keep riders safe during and after the current pandemic. With the achievement of D.C Statehood, we will be able to get the additional Federal resources and funding to expand the public transportation system without placing the cost burden on DC excessively.

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?

I would like us to be a “15 Minute State”.



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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?

Expanding the social safety net through thoughtful budgeting is always important, but will be more feasible through the fight for Statehood, once we get the federal government to provide financial support to Urban areas including DC.

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

I have been a leader in the D.C tenant's rights movement since 1987 when I organized my own tenant association. We need to ensure low-income renters have the ability to assert their rights and remain in reasonable housing, and everyone should have the opportunity and the support to buy property. D.C tenant law is extensive and we need to make sure renters have the knowledge they need to use these laws to protect themselves.

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?

D.C Statehood would give us the assurance of consistent funding and equal support across all parts of our city, and take away the necessity for each neighborhood to rely only on itself.

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



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Each D.C neighborhood represents its own personality and individual spirit. As an official elected at-Large, I am not going to single out a specific community, because like my children, I love them all equally.

Education

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

D.C public schools are heading in the right direction, but not fast enough. We need to bridge the technology divide and make sure each student has access to laptops or tablets, as well as books, particularly in the midst of this Pandemic.

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

Individually, on a case by case basis.

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

Special Education requires teachers and training, and these need to be available equally throughout all District schools. My advocacy for DC Statehood will hopefully provide additional federal resources for this and other needed programs.

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?



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Ensuring proper student: teacher ratios, teacher training, and proper salaries are crucial to ensuring that classrooms are prepared for learning, and all of these will be helped by D.C Statehood and federal assistance. Until then, I respect the authority of the DC State Board of Education to make these decisions.

Criminal Justice

15. What items do you think should be included in an effective safety plan that would lower crime rates in DC without infringing on the constitutional rights of DC residents?

Fighting Congress and the NRA in keeping illegal guns off our streets is a priority of mine.

Wages and Labor

16. 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?

I will continue to advocate for strong programs at the Federal level, my role would be to work with local decision makers on these issues.

Government Accountability

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



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The entire population of DC is underrepresented because DC is not a State and the D.C Council's decision, good or bad are subject to the whims of a frequently hostile and often incompetent Congress. Because the entire District of Columbia is unrepresented in our Federal government, the Council can not be entirely effective.

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

I will continue the work I have been pursuing since my first election to this office, by being open and reachable at all times to my constituents, and by always striving for transparency about my goals and initiatives.

19. 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?

The Fair Election Program, though an admirable idea, does not extend participation to every candidate. Candidates for Federal offices are not eligible to participate.

20. 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?

I support the 16 year old voting age, but D.C Statehood is our ultimate jump into true representation. Until D.C citizens are afforded the representation and recognition which comes with being an American state, we will never be



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**in charge of our own elections, we will never truly choose our own policies,
and we will never have the support needed to invoke real reforms.**