

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, now in her fifteenth term as the Congresswoman for the District of Columbia, is the Chair of the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. She serves on two committees: the Committee on Oversight and Reform and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

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?

Member (Delegate) House of Representatives

Primary focuses: DC statehood and increasing funds for DC to make up for Covid-19 losses.

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

The major reason the District carries a surplus today is because of my bill that got congress to take on the cost of major DC state functions when the District became insolvent. As a result, the District has accumulated a large surplus. However, the Covid-19 crisis will almost surely cause the District to use some of that surplus.

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?

Because of Covid-19 I am working in Congress to increase safety net spending in virtually all areas of spending to benefit the District.

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?

Considering that the District has the highest local taxes in the region and is experiencing unprecedented unemployment and businesses turndown because of the covid-19 pandemic, the District should not add stress on residents and businesses by raising taxes at this time. This is the time to draw on some of the Districts large accumulated surplus to tide the city over until the economy returns and I can get more funds from Congress.

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?

As subcommittee chair of Highways and Transit, I am writing the 2020 transportation bill with emphasis on reducing climate change effects. I am prioritizing new funding for transit and buses, particularly electric buses, along with highway funds to make sidewalks more suitable for walking. My emphasis is on making DC the most walkable city in the United States.

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?

To eliminate food deserts and improve local options, I am co-sponsoring the Super Market Tax Credit for Underserved Areas Act (H.R. 3123) to give incentives to establish supermarkets in underserved areas and the Healthy Food Access for All Americans Act (H.R. 1717) to give tax credits and grants to provide healthy food in 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?

To address homelessness and the impact of covid-19, in a sustainable way, I am co-sponsoring bills, HR-1978, HR-1856, and HR 3272 - providing for supportive housing and services and vouchers. I have also co-signed a letter to the Secretaries of HUD, CDC, and HHS asking for steps to be taken to ensure care of homeless people during COVID-19. I have asked that they be placed in hotels instead of shelters, which spread the virus.

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

To create and protect affordable housing for home buyers and renters, I have co-sponsored 6 bills. Examples are: HR 1737 that would invest \$445 billion over 10 years in a National Housing Trust Fund and HR 2019, the Rent Relief Act providing a refundable tax credit for a principal residence that exceeds 25% of annual gross income.

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?

_My bills are creating commercial and residential development in underdeveloped neighborhoods on

vacant land without any displacement of residents: The Wharf (SW Waterfront); Capitol Riverfront (SE Waterfront); NOMA, and Walter Reed.

I have introduced legislation to allow the District to buy the RFK Stadium site, which is unused federal land, as requested by the District.

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

Gentrification, a market issue sweeping neighborhoods throughout the District, is difficult to control. The best model is occurring in connection with the 11th street bridge project, in ward 8 and is the first that attempts to get in front of gentrification.

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

D.C. public education reform is a local home rule, not a congressional issue. My most significant contribution to education in the District is my bill, DC Tuition Access Grants (DC TAG), that allows any DC high school graduate to attend any U.S. public state college or university using an annual tuition grant of \$10,000, which is more than the cost of most US public colleges. D.C. Tag has more than doubled college attendance by District residents. I have gotten more than enough congressional funding each year for every DC student, who desires to use it - \$40 million in 2020.

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

Uses to be made of school properties that have been closed over the past few years is a local home rule decision that is no business of the congress. Just as, I have gotten many new sites for DC from the federal government at no cost to the city. (see #9), providing opportunities for affordable housing, perhaps the toughest issue facing DC. The District could do the same with school properties if it ensures it will not need them for schools in the future.

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

To ensure equitable Special Education across the city, I have co-sponsored the IDEA Full Funding Act (HR 1878) and the Funding Early Childhood is the Right IDEA Act (HR 2315).

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?

To ensure appropriate school staffing and support and retention of teachers and administrators, among other bills, I have co-sponsored the Teacher Diversity and Retention Act (H.R.4288) to address the D.C. and nationwide teacher shortage and the Teacher Health and Wellness Act (H.R. 4221) for a NIH study to reduce teacher stress and increase teacher health.

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.

_Members of Congress have no jurisdiction to create safety plans for their districts, which is the function of local officials. However, I have co-sponsored several bills to help lower crime rates without infringing on constitutional rights. An example, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act, supported by 90% of House Democrats and Republicans, that would lower crime rates by keeping felons and domestic abusers from buying a gun from licensed or unlicensed sellers. Another example is the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act that would allow temporary removal of firearms from a person at risk of harming himself or others, but only after a court hearing providing due process with the right to appeal at any time.

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

I am the co-sponsor of several bills to improve reentry for returning citizens. Examples include the First Step Act (HR 5682) to expand opportunities for productive activities and the Fair Chance Act (HR 1076) barring federal employers and contractors from asking about criminal history until the final stages of hiring.

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

To help ensure minority and woman owned businesses can compete for projects, I have gotten language in all 12 appropriation bills requiring federal agencies to document their spending on advertising contracts with businesses owned by woman and minority in the prior fiscal year as well as projections for the upcoming year.

Congress cannot mandate local affirmative action even on federal projects | have gotten for the city, but

I strongly support DC requirements, such as set asides and hub zones for construction and development here.

However, to help assure that minority and women owned businesses benefit from projects my bills bring to the city. I track that hiring and publish the results.

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?

The "interest of the broad public" in DC or any jurisdiction is difficult to define, particularly in DC, with the increasing 50 – 50 racial make-up and a growing white population. However, the Council's progressive laws, which I constantly have to defend from Republican attempts to nullify, are often reflective of those most in need. Local taxes also are progressive, with upper income residents paying significantly more. Racially, representation in the council from the 8 wards reflects the racial composition of their wards. Three of five at-large (city-wide) members are white. Notably missing is a Hispanic member in a city with a growing Hispanic population.

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

To demonstrate accessibility and responsiveness to my constituents

1.

I am in daily contact using all major social media.

2.

Email constituents a weekly e-newsletter on my bills and other congressional activities.

3.

Email constituents a quarterly newsletter on my congressional accomplishments.

4.

Give updates on congressional activities at Norton in your Neighborhood and ANC meetings in communities throughout DC

5.
Speak at community association meetings.
6.
Hold town hall meetings.
7.
Hold an annual job fair offering open positions in DC, Maryland,
and Virginia.

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?

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?

As a member of Congress, a federal official, I am not covered by the local Fair Elections contribution program, ranked choice voting on local changes in age. I will strongly oppose any attempt by congress to overturn DC laws and will protect all local campaign reforms from interference by congress.