

HUMAN NEEDS 1ST

2004 Primary Election Voter Guide

August 2004

Esta guía está disponible en español. Para más información, vaya a la página de Internet de CARECEN-DC (Centro de Recursos para Centroamericanos): www.carecencdc.org, o llame a Ivette Iraheta: (202) 328-9799 extensión 26.

How This Guide Was Prepared

This Voter Guide was created by a coalition of organizations supporting the principle of Human Needs First -- that the city must meet the basic human needs of all District of Columbia residents, such as housing, food, health care, jobs, education, economic security, and child care. Organizations and individuals signing on to this effort are listed at the end of this introduction.

The Guide consists of answers to a questionnaire that was distributed to all candidates who had filed petitions with the Board of Elections and Ethics by the July 7 deadline. Candidates were given approximately one month to respond to the questionnaire. Responses are printed verbatim with one exception: we asked candidates to limit each answer to 100 words, and to respect those candidates who adhered to that limit, we have cut off longer answers at the point where they reach 100 words. If a candidate's responses do not appear in the Guide, that candidate did not send a response.

We encourage everyone to reproduce and distribute the Guides. Printed copies will be distributed at candidate forums and other public events. Electronic versions of the Guides are available at www.legalclinic.org. If you cannot access the Internet, please contact the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless at (202) 328-5500 for additional hard copies. For a copy of this Guide in Spanish, visit www.carecendc.org, or call Ivette Iraheta at (202) 328-9799, extension 26.

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21 st Century School Fund	Gray Panthers of Metropolitan
Advocates for Justice and Education	Washington
CARECEN	Barbara Kagan
Children's Law Center	League of Women Voters of the District of
Citizens About Real Empowerment	Columbia
Coalition for the Homeless	Legal Aid Society of D.C.
Community of Hope	Lucius Mangrum, Jr.
Community Services Agency,	Neighbors' Consejo
Metro Washington Council, AFL-CIO	Our Place D.C.
Erin Corcoran	Parents United for the DC Public Schools
Council of Latino Agencies	Prevent Child Abuse of Metropolitan
DC Action for Children	Washington
DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy	Project ACTION
DC Employment Justice Center	Project South
DC Hunger Solutions	Pledge to Rebuild Our Public Schools 100%
DC Primary Care Association	Victor Robinson
DC Prisoners' Legal Services Project	Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals
DC VOICE	and Educators
Fair Budget Coalition	So Others Might Eat
For Love of Children	Southeast Children's Fund, Inc.
Georgetown Children's House Endowment	St. John's Community Services
to Promote Quality Early Childhood	University of the District of Columbia David
Education	A. Clarke School of Law
	Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless
	Women Empowered Against Violence, Inc.

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Voting in the District of Columbia

Voting is the easiest way to make sure your government responds to your needs. If you qualify to vote, please do not miss your chance to speak out.

Election Dates

This year, the dates for voting are:

**** Primary Election: September 14, 2004***

The primary election is the first round of the election, in which we choose one person from each party to run in the general election. You will choose a candidate from a list of candidates who are the same political party that you are. If you are not registered as a member of a political party, you cannot vote in the primary. The three political parties holding primaries in D.C. are the Democratic Party, Republican Party, and Statehood-Green Party.

**** General Election: November 2, 2004***

The general election is when we choose the person who actually gets elected from the finalists who won the primary. Everyone can vote in this election no matter what political party you are or the candidate is. Please note that there is a special situation in the election for the At-Large Members of the Council, where one of the seats up for election this year cannot be held by a member of the majority party. In practice, this means when you cast your votes in the At-Large race, you will want to vote for two people from different parties. If you vote for two people in the majority party (Democratic party), one of your votes will not really count.

Voter Registration

In order to vote, you will need to be registered. You have to register 30 days before an election in order to vote in that election. Although it is too late to register for the Primary Election, you can still register for the General Election on or before October 4, 2004. If you are mailing in your registration information, it has to be postmarked by that date.

You are eligible to vote in the District of Columbia if you are:

- ✓ A US citizen
- ✓ A DC resident (you live in DC)
- ✓ At least 18 years old by Election Day.

If you meet these requirements, you can register to vote by filling out a Mail-In Voter Registration Form. You can get this form on the Internet at http://www.dcboee.org/serv/download_index.shtm. Forms are also available at DC public libraries, fire houses, and police stations. Or, you can call (202) 727-2525.

When you register to vote, you will be asked if you want to be "affiliated" with a political party such as the Democratic Party, Republican Party, or Statehood Green Party. If you do not wish to be a member of a party, mark the space for "no party affiliation" (independent) on the registration form. However, if you are not registered with one of the three major parties in D.C. you cannot vote in the primary election.

Once you register, you remain registered to vote, as long as the Board of Elections has your current address. When you move, you must notify the Board of Elections of your new address in writing.

Absentee Voting

You may vote "absentee" if you are unable to go to the polls due to a disability or other reasons or if you will be out of town on Election Day.

**** In-Person (at the Board of Elections office) Absentee Voting***

You can go to the office of the Board of Elections at 441 4th St., NW, Suite 250, beginning 14 days before the election. The office is open Monday through Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. The deadline for in-person absentee voting is 4:45 p.m. the day before Election Day.

**** By Mail Absentee Voting***

If you are cannot get to the office, you can get an absentee ballot by mail. To do this, you can submit the application for Mail Absentee Ballot that can be found at http://www.dcboee.org/serv/download_index.shtm. If you do not have access to the Internet, you can call (202) 727-2525.

**** Emergency Absentee Ballots***

If you can not go to the polls on Election Day because of an accident or sudden illness that occurs during the week before the election, you might be able to cast an emergency ballot. For more information, call (202) 727-2525.

*** *Special Voting Services***

If you are elderly, disabled, or have trouble reading your ballot, you can call (202) 727-2525 for help with:

- ✓ Curbside voting
- ✓ Voting sites accessible to wheelchairs or walkers
- ✓ Assistance in voting
- ✓ Large print voting instructions
- ✓ Wheelchair accessible voting booths
- ✓ TDD service at (202) 639-8916

Finding Your Polling Place

If you are already registered to vote but can't remember where to go to vote, you can find your polling place by visiting the Board of Elections website at <http://www.dcboee.org/serv/index.shtm>. If you know your precinct number, you can look up where to vote by clicking on "polling places." If you do not know your precinct number, you can click on "polling place locator." It will ask you to put in your address, and then you should click the button that says "make report." It will then give you a map and a list of various pieces of information about your address. The very last piece of information in the list is your precinct number (go to the bottom of the list).

If you do not have Internet access, you can call (202) 727-2525 for information.

Overview of Issues Facing the District of Columbia in 2004

As the 2004 elections approach, the status of the District of Columbia is strong in many ways. The city's economy is growing after a two-year downturn that started in 2001. Our booming real estate market — evidenced by a multitude of construction cranes downtown and sharply rising housing costs in many neighborhoods — is a sign that the District is an attractive place to live and do business. In just the last six months, District tax revenues have started to grow at a very healthy rate.

Yet many challenges remain. The strong District economy has not benefited all residents or all neighborhoods. According to the 2000 census, 109,500 of the District's residents live in poverty, or 20.2% of the population -- an increase of 14% from a decade ago. More than 35,000 of those poor residents are children. And the gap between high-income and low-income residents in DC is growing and is now wider than in any major U.S. city. The increasing popularity of the District has fueled gentrification in many neighborhoods, leaving fewer affordable housing options for low-income residents and increasing the likelihood that poor families will be concentrated in a shrinking number of highly stressed neighborhoods.

Public policies have not adequately addressed these issues. Years of budget cuts in human services have severely limited the government's ability to coordinate and provide basic services to District residents. Working parents often cannot get the child care help they need. Families that are behind on rent bills typically cannot get emergency assistance to keep them from becoming homeless. And in many agencies, weak performance and oversight mean that needed services often are not delivered.

Over the next few years, the District of Columbia government will face many difficult questions, such as how to balance need for tax relief with need to restore services and how to balance neighborhood development with the need for affordable housing. The facts bulleted below illustrate some of the challenges facing the city's leadership. These facts should provide a useful context for the candidate answers that comprise this Voter Guide.

Sources for these facts are on file with the Human Needs First Coalition and can be obtained from consultant Julia Gordon at Julia@juliagordon.net or 202-669-0424.

Jobs and Income Support

- In the District of Columbia, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) provides a family of four with a maximum of \$463.00 per month. Even a family receiving this maximum amount will still be living well below the federal poverty guideline, which states that a family of four is "poor" if the monthly income is \$1,571 per month or less.
- In 2002, the most recent year for which statistics are available, fully 55.3% of workers in the District of Columbia earned less than 200% of the federal poverty line, or \$37,700 a year for a family of four, and 16% of these workers at full-time, full-year jobs did not even earn enough to exceed the poverty line at all.
- The District's Emergency Assistance program was abolished in 1996 because of the city's financial crisis. When it existed, more than \$11 million in local and federal matching funds helped over 11,600 residents facing temporary income shortages meet their rent, mortgage, utility, and food payments, thereby preventing homelessness and other long-term problems. Since that program's demise, less than \$500,000 in federal funds has been available for emergency assistance.
- Between 2000 and 2002, the unemployment rate of all D.C. residents rose from 5.8% to 6.5%. Broken down by race, this number represents an increase from 2.3% to 3.2% for whites and from 8.3% to 9.2% for blacks.
- In D.C., 37% of adults lack the literacy skills required to fill out a job application or locate an intersection on a map, yet only 9% of jobs in the District are appropriate for people with that reading level. The District's mismatch between literacy level and skills required by the local job market is the highest in the nation.

Housing

- In the 1990s, the District lost over 16,000 rental housing units. Additional losses of affordable housing can be expected as contracts for thousands of units in Section 8 projects expire without being renewed in the near future.
- Over 50,000 households are on the waiting lists for public housing or a Section 8 voucher.
- The average cost of obtaining a modest rental unit in DC is \$999 per month for a two-bedroom apartment. A family would need an annual income of at least \$39,960 to afford a unit at this cost without spending more than 30 percent of its income for housing.
- Homelessness continues to rise and especially impacts families: the number of eligible families seeking shelter more than doubled in the last four years, rising from 1,276 in 2000 to 3,100 in 2003. Approximately 300 families are still on the District's waiting list for emergency shelter, with a wait of about six months.

Immigration

- While the District's overall population has been declining, its immigrant population has more than doubled in the last thirty years. Compared to other U.S. cities, the metropolitan area of Washington ranks sixth in number of immigrants, while the District has an immigrant population of over 73,000. The largest immigrant populations are from non-European and non-English speaking countries such as El Salvador, Ethiopia, and India.

Children's Issues

- Right now, 31,500 children are eligible for subsidized child care. The goal in the FY 2005 budget is to serve 40% of those children – far fewer than the 75% that were served in 2002.
- In the District, 28% of children in foster care are over the age of 15, compared to 19% nationally. Older youth have generally been in care longer, have experienced more disruptions than younger children, and must contend with a number of challenges that are exacerbated by their lack of connection to family, including elevated rates of medical problems, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy.
- On an average school day in 2002-2003, 19,234 children participated in the School Breakfast Program and 48,432 children participated in the School Lunch Program.
- Only one-third of the District's children now live with both parents in those parents' own household. Forty percent live with a single mother, and nearly 20 percent live with grandparents or other relatives.
- The Child and Family Services Agency/court monitor's baseline report shows that there is no case plan for children in foster care in 70% of the cases reviewed; there are no current treatment plans for children in kinship and family services in 73% of the cases reviewed; and social worker visits during the first 8 weeks of foster care placement occurred less than weekly in 58% of the cases.

Education

- Although the public school budget rose this year, the increase did not even cover teacher salary raises that were agreed upon two years ago. Consequently, those raises have resulted in staff cuts at almost every school this September - - some schools lost as many as ten staff positions, including librarians, custodians, art teachers, music teachers and physical education instructors.
- Special education costs account for almost one-third of the approximately \$870 million public school operating budget, while special education students account for only 17% of the total enrollment.

Health Care

- Almost 25% of all District residents rely on Medicaid for their healthcare.
- Over 300,000 District residents lack regular access to primary care providers.
- In 2003, billing and accounting problems forced the District to spend \$99 million of its own money on health costs that should have been paid for with federal money. Similarly, since 2000, the District has lost over \$12 million in federal dollars left unspent from the State Children's Health Insurance Program because the DC Medicaid agency did not act to expand coverage and use the funds. This year, another \$3 million will be lost.
- Rates of asthma, HIV infection, high blood pressure, diabetes, dental cavities, and addiction in DC are among the highest in the nation, and the illnesses are concentrated in lower-income, minority communities.

Governance

- The Congress must approve, and the President must sign, all District legislation, including the budget. This requires that the District of Columbia start to develop its budget more than a year before the beginning of the fiscal year and finalize its budget four months before the beginning of the fiscal year.
- The District still faces a substantial structural deficit, and Congress has failed to enact proposed legislation that would provide an \$800 million annual payment to the District. In addition, strict federal rules governing DC's rainy day fund make it the most restrictive reserve fund in the nation.
- Recent budget debates and efforts by the DC Council to oversee the budget actively have been hampered by a lack of clear and accessible budget information, despite reforms intended to make the budget more transparent. The FY 2005 budget support act requires that the FY 2006 budget include details to the service level, and it also requires the CFO and Mayor's office to make public a vast array of budget documents.

AT-LARGE COUNCIL MEMBER RACE

Candidates for this office:

(Candidates whose names are in a lighter typeface did not submit a response.)

- ✓ **Harold Brazil (Democrat)**
- ✓ **Sam Brooks (Democrat)**
- ✓ **Kwame Brown (Democrat)**
- ✓ Don Folden, Sr. (Republican)
- ✓ Robert Pittman (Republican)
- ✓ **Laurent Ross (Statehood-Green)**
- ✓ **Carol Schwartz (Republican)**

Question #1: Affordable Housing

The District has lost a great deal of affordable housing in recent years. Reasons include private economic development, HOPE VI conversions, the loss of Project-based Section 8 properties through termination, repayment and opt-outs, and private landlords choosing not to take housing vouchers. How do you think D.C. can build and preserve affordable housing and maintain culturally and economically diverse neighborhoods?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): As Chair of the Economic Development Committee I have worked hard to address the housing needs of low-income and working-class households. I worked to create programs which preserve and promote affordable housing, including creating a permanent funding mechanism for the Housing Production Trust Fund, a property tax cap for low-income residents, and tax incentives for building or rehabilitating affordable housing. I have also pushed for economically diverse neighborhoods by providing incentives for mixed income housing projects and for building affordable housing in higher-income areas. I will continue these types of efforts to create new affordable housing units in vibrant communities.

Brooks (D): The District absolutely must do a better job of providing more affordable housing to its residents. First, we must ensure the Housing Production Trust Fund is fully funded - every single year. Second, we must make certain new housing developments utilize so-called inclusionary zoning practices, so that a percentage of units, upwards of 25 percent, are reserved for low-income residents. Lastly, we must reorganize the committee structure on the DC Council so there is a stand-alone committee on affordable housing. Only then will this issue get the attention it deserves.

Brown (D): I believe that the District can do a much better job using its own land to build affordable housing for our city's police officers, fire fighters, teachers, and

other public employees. To prevent involuntary displacement, I also support capping property tax increases at the rate of inflation for our city's long-term, low-moderate income residents. My values are different than Councilmember Brazil's. He recently voted to cut the period of time that units built using D.C. funds remain affordable from 15 years to 5 years. You can find my full affordable housing platform at www.votekwamebrown.org.

Ross (S-G): The most important act we take to preserve diverse neighborhoods is to continue and strengthen rent control. Rent control can be strengthened by expanding it to cover all housing, including new housing. We should also restore the Tenant Assistance Program and emergency assistance. Public housing residents should not be removed from their homes, except for cause, without new public housing being provided for them. Abandoned homes that are not properly maintained should be expropriated by the City and turned into housing for low-income residents.

Schwartz (R): The great and valued diversity of our city includes the economic diversity of its citizens, and I want to maintain it. When I began my term as Chair of the Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG) in 2001, I identified affordable housing as the Board's focus issue. Since then, the District has established a Housing Production Trust Fund, and COG has established a regional fund which I co-chair. These funds, combined with sound and aggressive policies, will help us to protect our longtime residents, who hung in there during the bad times, from being priced out now.

Question #2: Rent Control

The District's rent control law is up for renewal in 2005. Would you support reauthorization of the law and what changes, if any, would you propose to it?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): I support the reauthorization of the rent control law.

Brooks (D): I will seriously consider supporting the reauthorization of the District's rent control in 2005. Far too many low income Washingtonians literally live at the edge of homelessness, and rent control is often one of the key components that keeps them from that fate.

Brown (D): I fully support reauthorizing the District's rent control law. My father and many of my relatives live on fixed incomes in rent-controlled apartments in the District. This is a very personal issue for me. If rent control is allowed to expire, they might lose their homes. I support Councilmember Fenty's efforts to strengthen the law by setting the baseline for rent increases at a unit's current rent level and not the rent ceiling.

Ross (S-G): I will support reauthorization of rent control. I will propose expanding rent control to cover all housing, including new housing.

Schwartz (R): Strong rent control laws are a necessity. The city is experiencing a real estate boom the likes of which we have not seen before, which is great because real estate taxes help finance the many social services that our residents need. However, the downside is that market rate rent is skyrocketing and thereby jeopardizing many longtime residents as well. We need to keep our rent control laws in place and I am open to looking at changes that would add protections while ensuring that we do not dry up the rental market, as has happened in the past.

Question #3: Homelessness

Homelessness in the District has increased 17% since 2001. Now, roughly 8,253 men, women, and children are homeless on any given day. How would you improve how the city provides shelter, housing and services to people who are homeless?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): The District must take a multi-pronged approach to combating homelessness. I have fought for job- and skills-training programs for those who need help in becoming self-sufficient and thereby finding permanent housing. I will also continue to push District agencies to build quality affordable housing to reach those at all levels of income. In addition, we must work to make sure that the District develops a long term plan on how to eradicate homelessness. We also must make sure the Department of Health and Department of Mental Health have the appropriate staff and budget to carry-out a multi-layered plan.

Brooks (D): There is no question that homelessness is a complex issue involving problems ranging from the lack of good job opportunities to mental health issues to the lack of affordable housing – all issues to which I will focus considerable attention if elected to the Council. In the short term, however, I am fully supportive of the so-called “Homeless No More” initiative, a national effort endorsed last year by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. It is estimated this program could nearly eradicate homelessness within a decade.

Brown (D): There are no easy answers to the problem of homelessness in the city. The court ordered deinstitutionalization of the 1980s put many people on the street who were not capable of fending for themselves. The cost of housing is increasing faster than people’s incomes, making housing too expensive for the working poor. There are not enough shelter beds available. Each one of these problems requires a different set of policies to rectify. We need to implement a

variety of measures, from increasing the number of shelter beds to increasing the number of Section 8 units that are available.

Ross (S-G): My 1st priority would be to reduce homelessness through the measures I have described above in my responses to Question 1. This would improve overall services to the homeless by reducing the total number of citizens without homes, allowing us to concentrate our resources more effectively on the remaining homeless. Improving our safety net will also help reduce the number of homeless.

Schwartz (R): I do not believe that the recent increase in the District's homeless rate is necessarily indicative of a lack of services. Instead, I believe the increase indicates a lack of coordination among the District agencies that offer those services. This lack of agency coordination can make it hard for homeless persons to access needed services. Our relevant agencies need to develop a more streamlined, efficient process for accessing homeless services, and we must continue to improve both the quality and the availability of mental health and drug treatment services which so many in our homeless population require.

Question #4: NIMBY (Not in My Backyard)

Especially as more economic development takes place in the city, it becomes harder to find sites for homeless shelters, group homes, and even affordable housing. How would you make sure that these services can be offered in a community-based setting? Please address the problem of resident resistance to such facilities being opened in their neighborhoods.

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): There are several ways to ensure that these services are provided throughout the city. First, as I have supported in the past, we must provide financial incentives to private developers, such as the tax breaks I championed for affordable housing. We must also provide low-income loans and grants to the many fine non-profit organizations who provide these services. In addition, we should use District-owned land to provide homeless shelters, group homes and affordable housing. Perhaps most important, we must educate residents about the needs for these services in the community and the lack of negative side-effects.

Brooks (D): NIMBY issues involving homeless shelters and group homes are something that no neighborhood likes to deal with. But, the reality of the situation is that every neighborhood – in all parts of the city – must share the responsibility of finding a place for such facilities.

Brown (D): I passionately believe it is our obligation to build more affordable housing in EVERY neighborhood in the District. A teacher should be able to live next door to where he/she teaches anywhere in the city. Many residents are wary of group homes because of the District's persistent inability to manage them. If elected, I pledge to be a full-time, fully engaged Councilmember to ensure that the District Government properly administers its group homes. If group homes are run correctly, they will not cause neighborhood problems and residents will not be afraid of them.

Ross (S-G): It is important that the D.C. City Council examine this problem closely in the next 4 years. Several states across the country have adopted some form of "anti-snob" legislation that makes it easier for developers to create affordable housing in high-income areas. We need to examine some of this legislation and see if we can adopt the best elements just for affordable housing but also for providing services in a community-based setting. Examples would include establishing a minimum percentage requirement for each Ward for affordable housing, group homes, etc.

Schwartz (R): There are zoning laws and other policies in place regarding the location or expansion of human services facilities in our city. If an organization or other entity is contemplating a legal land use according to District law, then the only restrictions that should be imposed are those that are based on these laws and policies. This does not mean, however, that there should not be opportunities for residents to express their concerns. In fact, the city should give adequate notice to allow for those neighbors to provide constructive input and no community should ever get more than its fair share.

Question #5: Support for Immigrants

Close to 13% of the District's residents are immigrants. How would you improve services for immigrants living in D.C., especially with regard to jobs, housing, and language access?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): It is important that the District provide services for immigrants to enjoy the freedoms and opportunity they came to enjoy. I was a co-sponsor of the Language Access Act which provides greater access and participation in public services, programs, and activities for residents who have limited or no English proficiency. By providing information in multiple languages will allow residents to apply more easily for housing and job opportunities. In addition, I co-introduced legislation to allow permanent resident alien to vote in local election; this will help ensure that the immigrant community's voice is heard by elected officials.

Brooks (D): The diversity of our neighborhoods and our city, without a doubt, is one of the central characteristics that makes the District of Columbia so special. With this in mind, there is no question we must do everything within our power to embrace our immigrant population – and make every effort to provide jobs, housing, and language access. It is also vital that our immigrant population is allowed a voice in their local elected leadership, and that’s why I’m supportive of the effort to allow immigrants to vote in local elections.

Brown (D): The language barrier is the simplest for the District Government to resolve. The District simply does not have enough foreign language translators and operators available to service the growing immigrant population in the District. We need to increase the number of bilingual employees in every District agency. The jobs and housing issues facing immigrants are not very different than the ones facing working class families all over the District. My ability to successfully address those issues is one of the major reasons why the city’s labor unions have endorsed my candidacy.

Ross (S-G): Language access is the most important issue for immigrants. I support recent legislation, the Language Access Act, which requires all major D.C. government departments to assess the need for and offer oral language services as well as provide written translations of public documents. I will also fight for all D.C. agencies to hire more bilingual workers so that immigrants can interact fully with their government. Once the language playing field is level, we can move forward to address other concerns of immigrants which coincide with the interests of all D.C. citizens: jobs, housing, healthcare, etc.

Schwartz (R): Immigrants to the United States who decide to become District residents are just that—District residents. As such, they are entitled to the same protections and benefits as any District resident. The difference arises when it comes to the language barrier that sometimes exists. To address this issue, I co-sponsored the Language Access Act of 2003, which became law in June 2004 and which requires all District agencies dealing with the public to provide oral language services when necessary. Now I want to focus on working with our schools and non-profits to increase access to English language education.

Question #6: Prisoner Reentry

Every year, more than 2,500 men and women return to D.C. from jails and prisons. What strategies would you pursue to help these residents reintegrate into their community? Please address access to jobs, housing, and treatment programs.

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): I will continue to provide leadership in the area of public safety. Not only must we get criminals off the streets we must also make sure opportunities

are available for rehabilitated residents to reintegrate into their community. I have worked with DOES to make sure programs are available to provide individuals the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to transition successfully back into the community. We must also work to ensure that transitional housing opportunities are available for reentrants. Since so much crime is connected to substance abuse, we must ensure that we have quality substance abuse programs.

Brooks (D): I greatly admired a former challenger for this at-large seat on the Council, Alvin Bethea. He spoke passionately about the needs of ex-offenders in DC, and, frankly, brought a much needed focus to this issue. I hope to continue this focus. There is just no question about it: The District government can, and should, be doing more to provide jobs, housing, and drug and treatment programs for ex-offenders. Without these tools, this group of Washingtonians is not given a proper chance to succeed – and so it should be no surprise many return to their previous life of crime.

Brown (D): My platform calling for more vocational training in our public schools, more job apprenticeship programs with our labor unions, requiring projects using District funds to hire District residents for more than 50% of their workforce, and my affordable housing proposals all will help prisoners find jobs and housing. I also think that it is unconscionable that the District only spends \$1 million on helping roughly 2,500 released prisoners reenter society. Something is wrong when we spend roughly \$40,000 per prisoner per year to lock 'em up but only \$400 per year to help ensure that they don't go back to jail.

Ross (S-G): We need to make a much bigger investment on the front-end so that we do not continue to pay money to re-incarcerate former prisoners who do not successfully reintegrate into society. I will propose expanding the budget for counseling for ex-offenders, for people who can help them gain access to jobs, housing, and education.

Schwartz (R): We need to decrease the number of people going to jail by providing more opportunities for job training and education. Fewer people entering the penal system means fewer people coming out. For those re-entering the community, having access to appropriate services is vital. Release facilities such as halfway houses should offer drug and alcohol treatment as well as access to education, training and employment. In the recent budget cycle, I recommended that additional funds be allocated for juvenile inmate education programs, and am fully aware that more rehabilitative programs need to be available to our adult inmates as well.

Question #7: Juvenile Justice

The D.C. Council recently approved the closing of Oak Hill, the controversial juvenile detention facility in Laurel, Maryland. What system

of juvenile detention do you propose to replace Oak Hill? Please include how you would address any community opposition to smaller, neighborhood-based group homes.

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): We must work hard to deter juveniles from turning to a life of crime. I have always been a leader on the Council when it comes to public safety because I focus on preventing crime rather than focusing on the problem after it occurs. By providing our youth alternatives and providing them with proper education we can make sure that we are producing the next generation of leaders. I would not support the closure of Oak Hill unless another facility is in place for youth detention services.

Brooks (D): I am strongly supportive of the Council's action to close Oak Hill. The facility should be demolished and replaced with a new, first-class detention center. The District government must effectively meet the needs of our children and give them the tools they need to lead productive, law-abiding lives.

Brown (D): I support the City Council's decision to begin the process of closing Oak Hill. However, I think it would be irresponsible to close Oak Hill without having already identified a new home for the 800 residents of the facility. No one has put forward such an alternative. I am not an expert in juvenile detention, and neither is anyone else on the Council. If elected, I would immediately push for the creation of a blue ribbon panel of experts to identify and recommend the best way of creating an alternative to Oak Hill in a short period of time.

Ross (S-G): We need to provide special care and treatment to juvenile offenders in small, cottage, and home-like environments, not in large warehouses like Oak Hill. We need to immediately proceed with construction of the Mount Olivet Road Detention Center to provide our troubled youth with multidisciplinary care and treatment prior to their trials and disposition. We also need to develop more residential treatment options in community and home-base setting. See my discussion of "anti-snob" regulations above, under Question 4.

Schwartz (R): Serious and chronic juvenile offenders have to be dealt with firmly. Penalties must be such that they serve to deter crime, and parents need to be held accountable as well. Still, the primary goal of juvenile justice should always be rehabilitation. For less serious offenses where the Court finds that there is a stable, capable home, I support returning children to the home with mandated social service supports. We should not need an institution of Oak Hill's size because more children should be in supportive family environments. When this is not possible, I support a well-monitored therapeutic group home system.

Question #8: Affordable Child Care

The District government has only enough funding to cover 40% of the 31,500 children eligible for subsidized child care and related services in FY 2005. As a result, many low-income working families cannot find affordable child care. What would you do to ensure that child care is available to all families?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): It is important that the government support and collaborate with other public and private child and family advocacy organizations to formulate an effective continuum of services and care for District families that need proper child care. There must be affordable access to before and after school services and that is one of the reasons why I have been a strong proponent of a neighborhood-services based school system that provides all-day services. I have also worked hard on the economic development front to bring in more revenue so that we can fully fund these programs.

Brooks (D): Some studies estimate low income families spend an average of one third of their income on child care. This is outrageous. As a member of the DC Council, I will do whatever it takes to ensure that our working families have affordable and accessible child care. A working family shouldn't have to choose between child care and housing, utilities, food, clothing, or other basic needs.

Brown (D): We can not require single mothers to get jobs without ensuring that they can afford to put their children in child care. I will introduce legislation to double the District's Earned Income Tax Credit, providing the typical single mother an additional income of \$400 a year. I will also support increased funding for subsidized child care. Councilmember Brazil, on the other hand, voted to cut funding for child care subsidies in the FY05 Budget.

Ross (S-G): Childcare must be a right for all D.C. citizens. We must provide 100% of the children eligible for subsidized child care placement in low-cost or no-cost child care centers. We need to rearrange our priorities so that our most vulnerable citizens are more important than construction of a baseball stadium.

Schwartz (R): This is one of too many areas where the District has done a horrible job of going after available federal funds. As I have done in the past, I will continue to encourage the Executive to be far more aggressive and vigilant in accessing federal welfare-to-work dollars and TANF grants to provide affordable childcare. Also, trained and capable staff must be hired to address the childcare needs of low-income residents, as this is often a stumbling block to employment efforts of parents. The District should also look to expand its Head Start program to provide more slots.

Question #9: Public Schools

Recognizing that there are many city agencies providing services to the District's children, what steps would you take in your oversight and policy role to promote collaboration to enhance school outcomes? Please include your ideas for ensuring that the Superintendent, the Board of Education, the City Council, and the Mayor all work as a team to raise academic achievement.

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): A strong school system is critical to building strong communities and families. I have supported increases in funding for the public school system, while at the same time demanding results from that funding. I believe that smaller schools and class sizes are critical in building a successful school system. I support making the Superintendent a cabinet-level position. To allow the School Board to focus their efforts on actually educating our children I have introduced legislation that would transfer the responsibility of computer and information systems, personnel, security, and contract and procurement issues to the District agencies that handle such activities.

Brooks (D): From summer school programs to child health care to basic DCPS education, there is no question the needs of our children are met through a variety of District agencies. Thus, if we are to effectively meet these needs, there must be close collaboration between the various District agencies that deal with children. A member of the Council certainly can provide some of the leadership necessary to make this a reality – and that is exactly what I will fight to do when elected.

Brown (D): My education platform can be summarized as having three points. First, emphasize early childhood education. We must ensure that our kids can read, write, and do arithmetic by the 3rd grade. Second, we must reintroduce vocational education into the DCPS curriculum. Not every DCPS graduate is going to go to college. We must ensure that every child graduates with an employable skill. Third, create an all-elected School Board and empower a strong Superintendent to the school system on a day-to-day basis.

Ross (S-G): I strongly believe that we should return to an all-elected school board, although I would advocate keeping a separately-elected President as in the current system. We should make the Superintendent's position as strong as possible. I would also remove DCPS from oversight under the Chief Financial Officer Establishment Act of 2001. The new Superintendent must have control over his/her own fiscal operations and information.

Schwartz (R): During my tenure on the Board of Education in the 1970s and early 1980s, we hired strong superintendents who worked cooperatively with the

Board, the Mayor and the Council to improve our schools, and student test scores went up. Today, each entity involved in governing our schools shares the same goal, if not always the same approach. What is missing is a committed superintendent. The hiring process has been frustrating, but I remain optimistic that we will attract an individual who can meet the myriad challenges involved in running our school system with positive results. It can be done.

Question #10: Foster Care Transition

Young people raised in foster care often are not prepared to be on their own at age 21, when they must leave the foster care system. What programs would you support to help foster care youth aged 18-21 make the transition from foster care to independent adulthood?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): Life skills courses are another area that we must focus greater efforts on. By developing and promoting programs for our young people to learn life-skills job-readiness-training component. I am committed to finding funds that will enable DOES to initiate programs that focus on jobs and training support than enables young people to become more self-sufficient by learning how to make good decisions, avoiding bad associations, including family support services that facilitate connections to pro-social networks and provide structure to the people who need it and providing access to stable housing, including removing barriers to adequate living conditions.

Brooks (D): This is a clear gap in our public policy with regards to foster care, and it is something I will work to address on the Council. We need to ensure that young people are not left without the financial, housing, and other necessary supports and services they need between the time they leave foster care and their 21st birthday.

Brown (D): The District has done an abysmal job of managing its Child and Family Services Agency. We need a full-time Councilmember that can hold the CFSA accountable. The City Council could pass the best foster care transition legislation in the country. That legislation is useless if the CYSA is too incompetent to implement it. I would push CFSA to establish mentoring programs for foster care youth aged 18-21, ensure that every foster care youth aged 18-21 had access to counseling, and increase the number CFSA caseworkers to ensure that each young adult gets the individualized attention they deserve.

Ross (S-G): I would support legislation to make create a model program for foster youth transition, one that would be the best in the entire nation

Schwartz (R): We must do a better job of providing a safety net for youths who are transitioning out of foster care. Unfortunately, our system today provides too few transition services and, after leaving foster care, the incidence of incarceration and public assistance is much higher than for the general population. I support an outcome-based foster care system where foster children are no longer simply housed until their 18th birthday, but leave the system when they are ready to live independently. There should also be more opportunities for transitioning youths to be mentored by church and community groups or by caring individuals.

Question #11: Youth Recreation/Jobs

Young people between the ages of 14 - 21 report there are not enough recreational and job opportunities for them in D.C., especially during the summer. What would you do to increase recreational, job training and job opportunities for youth?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): I have fought to provide funding for new recreational centers throughout the District and for new and better-maintained bike paths in our parks and neighborhoods. I have also been the major Council proponent of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, which will create hundreds of new acres of recreation space, including new playing fields and miles of trails. As well, I will continue to support programs that provide our youth opportunities to serve in the community especially during the summer. I also introduced legislation to establish the Turning Points Program, a set of wraparound services to provide increased opportunities for our youth.

Brooks (D): Though the 1980's was a difficult decade for the District in general, one of the great hallmarks of those years was the tens of thousands of DC children who obtained summer jobs. If elected, I will work towards bringing back the kind of programs available in the 1980's so that our youth have the job training and opportunities they deserve.

Brown (D): In addition to bringing back vocational education and creating strong job apprenticeship programs in partnership with the city's business and labor communities, I would fight to increase funding for after school programs and nonprofits such as Babe Ruth Baseball, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Big Brother/Big Sister, and the YMCA. We need to offer our young people attractive and tangible alternatives to hanging out on a street corner. The relatively small amount of money required to offer an alternative pales in comparison with the cost of incarcerating young adults.

Ross (S-G): We need to return to 100% summer employment for our youth. I will work with business, government, and non-profits to ensure that all youth who

need a summer job can get one. I will also support greater investment in our recreational facilities. Dollars invested now in our youth are much better than dollars invested to incarcerate them and will cost the city much less money.

Schwartz (R): I think our recent past Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation did a good job of improving the city's recreation services. I will work with the new Director to continue in that vein. As for jobs, there are far too many companies doing well in this city for youths to go without jobs. While I will continue to support District funded summer jobs, I will also push for more corporate sponsored jobs. Companies are more anxious than one might think to partner with the city on such a good cause, and I would encourage the Mayor to pursue them.

Question #12: Minimum Wage

The D.C. minimum wage is currently \$6.15 an hour, which does not provide most minimum wage workers with a sufficient income to support a family living in the District. What level do you propose for a D.C. minimum wage and why?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): Based on legislation I fought for the District minimum wage is a dollar more than the federal level. However, I also believe it is time for us to revisit this issue and study the possibility of raising the rate.

Brooks (D): I am fully supportive of raising the minimum wage to \$7.00 by 2006. Since 1997, the value of the current DC minimum wage has decreased 14 percent - directly affecting the nearly 20,000 workers who make the minimum wage. The increase to \$7.00 would result in a \$2,000 raise for these workers, lifting many of them from the edge of the federal poverty line.

Brown (D): Currently the District's minimum wage is pegged to be \$1 above the Federal minimum wage. It is not enough. At its current level, someone earning minimum wage in the District and working full-time still lives in poverty. I would set the minimum wage to be \$1.50 above the federal minimum wage. At that level, combined with programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit, someone can work full-time and not be living in poverty. My position stands in stark contrast to Councilmember Brazil's opposition to increasing the minimum wage during the mid 1990s.

Ross (S-G): The minimum wage should be a bridge out of poverty not a condemnation to poverty. I propose whatever minimum wage, net of all taxes and tax rebates, would guarantee that a single-earner family of four would be able to live above the poverty line. If the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation, it

would be \$9.00 today. Given the expense of living in the District of Columbia, I would advocate for a \$10 minimum wage.

Schwartz (R): There is currently a bill at the Council that would raise the minimum wage to \$6.60 an hour, or the federal minimum wage plus \$1, in 2005, and \$7.00 an hour, or the federal minimum wage plus \$1, in 2006. I support this approach because it guarantees that the minimum wage will be at least \$7.00 per hour. I also like the fact that the bill spreads the increase over a two-year period. This will allow businesses an opportunity to prepare to absorb additional personnel costs without cutting positions, which is a concern with wage increases, particularly for small businesses.

Question #13: Unemployment Compensation

Currently, the average amount of unemployment compensation that D.C. workers receive is \$241 per week. In addition, payments end after 26 weeks regardless of whether the worker has found a new job. What do you believe is an appropriate level for unemployment benefits, both as to payments and as to the length of eligibility?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): In order to determine the level for unemployment benefits, I believe it is appropriate for the District to perform an analysis regarding the feasibility of raising the level and duration of unemployment compensation.

Brooks (D): Though efforts to reform welfare were well-intentioned - we should undoubtedly seek to reduce the number of people on welfare rolls - they have had dire consequences for too many Washingtonians. Current payments are certainly too low, and a limit of 26 weeks is likely too short.

Brown (D): You can't live on \$241 a week and live above the poverty line. I believe we should increase unemployment compensation to \$300 a week and peg future increases to the rate of inflation. I also believe that we should allow people to collect unemployment as long as they are enrolled in a job training or GED class, or other educational program and are actively looking for employment, for up to 18 months.

Ross (S-G): The District of Columbia ranks 51st, dead last, in its average unemployment compensation as a percentage of average wages earned in employment. This means that our unemployment compensation is grossly inadequate. I will advocate raising the average to \$300 per week and extending benefits to up to two years.

Schwartz (R): The District's maximum weekly unemployment compensation should be increased as the price of living in the District has certainly increased.

The maximum weekly benefit should be at least \$350 per week to be competitive with that of Maryland and Virginia. A 26-week benefit period, coupled with the provision of job training and placement services from the Department of Employment Services, should be sufficient for most individuals who are actively seeking re-employment during that time. However, this is an area in which I am open to further discussion.

Question #14: Primary Health Care

All D.C. residents with incomes below 200% of poverty are eligible for public health care benefits through Medicaid or through the Alliance. However, many residents still face obstacles in obtaining the health care coverage for which they are eligible because they do not receive health plan information or understand how to apply for benefits. Also, it is very hard for people who receive Medicaid to recertify their benefits, which results in many of them losing coverage for a period of time. Some people do not understand that they may continue to be eligible for Medicaid when their earnings increase or they lose TANF. How will you ensure that all D.C. residents access their public health benefits and obtain preventive and primary health care?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): Getting information out to the residents is a priority. Agencies must hold more events out in the community that people can attend and gain information about what programs are available. We also must ensure that the information is provided in the appropriate languages and that there is staff who can assist residents in getting benefits. All our agencies must work either by mobile van or through community offices to help residents in communities gain the information they need to access quality health care. I also supported the DC Medical Homes Initiative, to bring primary care facilities to our communities.

Brooks (D): There is no question this is a huge problem. It costs the District money in the long run, and, more importantly, means residents of the District aren't getting the care they deserve. A huge part of the solution is to have greater oversight over issues involving health care in the District – and that's why I have proposed creating a new committee that focuses exclusively on health issues. Currently, the Committee on Human Services has far too many issues under its purview, leaving the issue of health care without the attention it requires.

Brown (D): The D.C. Health Alliance and Medicaid combined have the potential to do so much for the city's working poor, but currently deliver so little. Improving the management and operation of the Health Alliance and Medicaid is the lynchpin to simultaneously saving Greater Southeast Community Hospital, stopping a drain on the city's finances, and immeasurably improving the ability of the city's working poor to access preventive and primary healthcare. In

November of 2003 I published an op-ed in East of the River addressing this very issue. My detailed platform can be found at www.votekwamebrown.org.

Ross (S-G): The D.C. City Council needs to provide strong oversight to the activities of the Alliance to ensure that it has adequate outreach programs so that all citizens are informed of their health rights. We also need to upgrade Southeastern Hospital, the only hospital east of the Anacostia River. I was director of the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant Program from 2000-2002 and led a successful outreach effort to inform all D.C. citizens of their educational funding rights. We can do the same with the Alliance.

Schwartz (R): First, I will encourage the Executive Branch to do more to ensure that the District capitalizes on the 70/30 federal-local match for Medicare through proper documentation and maximizes its spending on primary care and preventative medicine. Second, through strict oversight, I will work to ensure that the companies who are contracted by the District properly screen residents and inform them of their eligibility for various health care programs, and that they actually do what we are paying them to do. In the event they are not, I think that they should not only not be paid, but also replaced.

Question #15: Substance Abuse Treatment

Substance abuse affects 1 in 9 District residents, including a high percentage of teenagers and people with families. What would you do to increase the number of slots in prevention and intervention programs?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): Wasteful spending by District agencies uses up to large a portion of our annual budget. I have made sure through strong oversight of agencies I oversee that all the money my committee gives is properly used to enhance the lives of District residents. With tighter belt-buckling when it comes to the spending of funds there are opportunities to increase the number of slots in prevention and intervention programs. In addition, I have fought to bring more economic development to the District, in order to provide the revenue needed to fully fund our social service programs.

Brooks (D): I am convinced the way to deal with problems involving substance abuse is through rehabilitation and treatment, not putting people in jail. To that end, and to work to end the so-called 'treatment gap' between people that need treatment and the District's capacity to serve them, I am fully supportive of the work of DC's Task Force on Substance Abuse Prevention, Treatment, and Control. There is no question the District government can, and should, do more to provide adequate slots in prevention and intervention programs.

Brown (D): Spending more on prevention and intervention programs saves the District Government and our society far more over time than the incremental increase in cost, in addition to improving and saving the lives of those that enroll in these programs. Funding prevention and intervention programs saves human as well as financial capital. I will ensure that these programs are prioritized in the annual budget process. I certainly would spend more on prevention and intervention before I spent a penny on a baseball stadium.

Ross (S-G): Here is another example where a small amount of funds invested on the front end save the City from tremendous costs on the back end. I advocate increasing the number of slots in drug rehabilitation programs to meet the demand of all substance abusers.

Schwartz (R): As with homeless services, a major stumbling block to accessing substance abuse treatment is infrastructure. Clients are often required to complete a different intake at each agency or organization, which discourages some people. I would like to see a system in which treatment providers are electronically linked through a central office, so a comprehensive intake and referral could be done at one office. This would obviate multiple registrations and prevent duplication of services. I have always pushed for treatment on demand – we cannot afford to tell a substance abuser seeking help to come back next week – and choice in treatment.

Question #16: People with Disabilities

What programs would you support or propose to ensure that all D.C. residents with disabilities have access to support services, health care, and housing?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): It is important that the District providing the appropriate programs and opportunities for residents and visitors with disabilities. I have supported the Department of Housing and Community Development's efforts to provide funding for special needs housing. I have and will continue over the next four years to ensure that proper compliance with District and federal laws in regards to access are upheld. Obviously certain disabilities require health care assistance and I will fight to make sure those in need receive the proper health and social services they need.

Brooks (D): The District of Columbia has a sad history of effectively dealing with issues involving persons with disabilities. As a member of the Council, I will work diligently to turn this around – and to work to continue the progress seen with projects such as the recent opening of a community-based mental health facility on the U Street corridor.

Brown (D): My proposals to fix the D.C. Alliance and Medicaid will help ensure that people with disabilities have access to health care and the support services that they need. To provide persons with disabilities access to appropriate housing, I would require the District Government to assess the demand for such housing and ensure that affordable housing units are set aside to meet that demand.

Ross (S-G): If we fix the Alliance and work with Medicaid, we can meet the health care needs of all D.C. residents, including persons with disabilities. I am unaware of data on the support services and housing needs of disabled persons in D.C. If such data exist, the government should utilize them to ensure that all support service and housing needs of disabled persons are met. If the data do not exist, I feel strongly that we should immediately establish a commission to collect such data.

Schwartz (R): During the recent budget-making process, the Mayor and the Council approved a new tax to generate additional revenue from certain healthcare providers with their agreement, and a portion of this additional revenue will go toward enhancing services for people with disabilities. My brother Johnny, 18 months my senior and my only sibling, is an individual with mental retardation, so I have had a life-long interest in the care of individuals with disabilities. I know first-hand the challenges disabled people face, and I will work to ensure that the District does a better job of providing adequate and appropriate services.

Question #17: Secondhand Smoke

Legislation is pending in the D.C. Council that would ban smoking in workplaces -- including offices, restaurants, and bars -- to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke. What is your position on this legislation and why?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): I have stated my support for the smoke-free legislation, if the legislation exempts bars and restaurants. I believe that, in these areas, we should maintain a choice for patrons and workers. Many restaurants have become smoke-free and bars are also moving in this direction. At the same time, there are many residents who enjoy smoking at these facilities, and the government should not prohibit this option. I do encourage businesses to install high-efficiency ventilation systems in bars and restaurants to provide high air quality for all to enjoy. The government could offer incentives for the systems to be installed.

Brooks (D): I am strongly supportive of 100 percent smoke-free workplaces in the District. I know this isn't an issue where we can compromise. Workers in all

DC workplaces – including restaurants and bars – should be provided a work environment that is clean and safe.

Brown (D): My friend's father died because of secondhand smoke in his workplace. NoSmokePacDC endorsed me because enacting smokefree workplace legislation is one of my core values. I have included it on my literature and website from the start of my campaign over a year ago. I testified in favor of the legislation at the Council hearing in December. No worker should be needlessly exposed to hazardous materials at their worksite. All workers have a right to breathe clean air at your workplace. No one should have to endanger their lives to support themselves.

Ross (S-G): This issue is one of the most important issues of my campaign. Unlike the incumbent, Carol Schwartz, I support complete outlawing of smoking in all workplaces in the District. Workers exposed to secondhand smoke eight hours per day are having their bodies damaged just as badly as if they had smoked a pack of cigarettes daily. In fact, legislation is not pending in the D.C. Council because Ms. Schwartz has stopped it from getting out of her committee.

Schwartz (R): Most office buildings are smoke-free under current law, and there are already over 300 restaurants and/or bars in the District that are smoke-free. Others should be encouraged to decide to become smoke-free voluntarily, and that is why I introduced legislation which would provide a tax incentive to District restaurants and bars that do so. I believe in freedom of choice – freedom of an establishment to choose to become smoke-free, freedom of customers to patronize a smoke-free establishment or one in which smoking is allowed, and freedom of workers to choose where they work.

Question #18: Open Government

Public participation in the civic process requires that meetings and other government actions are open to the public with adequate advance notice. It also requires that clear and accurate information about the budget and other government decisions are readily available. What policies would you support to make the workings of government more open and inclusive?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): I believe that the government should do everything it can to keep the community informed. I have worked hard to make sure District agencies provide up to date information on their web pages and that the Office of Cable Television and Telecommunications provides continuous coverage of Council hearings and the Mayor's meetings. The more information that is provided to the public the more informed they will be about activities occurring in the District and their neighborhoods. Providing more assistance to ANC's also could help get more information out to the public.

Brooks (D): As a member of the Council, I will work hard to provide more 'sunshine' in DC government. Jurisdictions around the country have taken steps to make this a reality, and there is good reason to believe government and budget decisions have been more reflective of the concerns of the community as a result. It's time we bring openness in government to the District of Columbia.

Brown (D): Transparency and openness is critical to enabling the residents of the District to hold their elected officials accountable. First, the City Council must stop making substantive decisions behind closed doors. Second, the City Council needs to start recording and publishing votes on amendments to legislation. Third, the City Council needs change the budget process to ensure that the public has time to respond to amendments made on the dais. Fourth, the School Board needs to publish and post on its website a transparent, line-by-line analysis of its budget on an annual basis.

Ross (S-G): The City Council must stop making substantive decisions behind closed doors. I will work for stopping the current policy of informal Council meetings not open to the public. I will also advocate for the Board of Education to have a more open and comprehensible budget process.

Schwartz (R): I believe in open and inclusive government. Meetings at which official government action is taken should be open to the public, pursuant to District law. Regarding clear and accurate information about the budget and government decisions, all Council hearings and legislative meetings are subject to public notification, publicly televised, aired on-line and are available for the public to attend. Additionally, members of the public are welcome to testify at Council hearings, and I have always strongly encouraged citizen involvement. I intend to remain receptive and accessible to those I serve, just as I have throughout my time in elective office.

Question #19: Tax Parity Act

Income tax cuts under the Tax Parity Act, which were suspended in 2002, are scheduled to take effect again in 2005. These tax cuts will cost the District \$141 million per year, mostly to benefit D.C.'s higher-income residents. What are your views on whether these income tax reductions should take effect?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): I supported the Tax Parity Act as part of a whole package of tax cuts that help residents at all income levels. I also supported the Earned Income Tax Credit, which is a special tax break designed specifically for low- and moderate-income workers. People who qualify for the EITC will pay less in taxes or even get cash back. As part of this entire package of tax-reduction efforts, I support

the continued implementation of the Tax Parity Act, if it is fiscally prudent in the budgets for the coming years.

Brooks (D): I was dismayed to see the Council so quickly allow the Tax Parity Act to take effect again in 2005. While I understand the need to keep income tax rates as low as possible, I am very concerned the Tax Parity Act cuts – in current form – are not a prudent way to proceed. As a member of the Council, I will ensure that tax policy, while striving to keep rates low, is fair and progressive.

Brown (D): The vast majority of the benefits from Tax Parity accrue to the wealthiest of District residents, while the impact of the requisite service cuts fall on the poorest. Democrats don't act this way. Republicans do. Instead of resuming the Tax Parity cuts, we should redirect the funds to tax cuts that benefit the poorest of District residents as much as they benefit the wealthiest. Increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit, increasing the homestead deduction, and capping property tax increases on low-mod income homeowners are much more equitable, and Democratic, ways of reducing taxes.

Ross (S-G): I am opposed to continuing this regressive tax reductions and favor returning to the original tax structure and making it even more progressive. The current District income tax system is even less progressive than the Federal income tax system.

Schwartz (R): I have always tried to balance tax parity with the city's revenue requirements, but I do think that it is important for the District to achieve a more equal footing with our neighbors in Maryland and Virginia. We need to be competitive for new residents, jobs and businesses, and we need to keep those that we do have from relocating to the suburbs. While tax relief may not provide additional revenue immediately, I strongly believe that if we responsibly and selectively reduce tax rates, the resulting increase in tax volume will, over time, more than make up for rate reductions.

Question #20: Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund

In 1999, the District of Columbia created a Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to manage its share of funds received under a national settlement with the tobacco industry. D.C.'s fund now totals roughly \$60 million per year. Under the tobacco trust fund legislation, half of all funds received must be saved for future needs. The remaining half can be used for new or expanded services, including health, education, and social services. How would you propose to use the available funds?

Candidate Answers:

Brazil (D): I would focus the use of the money on providing greater health care coverage for children and improving the number and quality of primary care

facilities. I would also use the funds to make sure our parks and recreational centers are fully equipped, have a high quantity and variety of programmed activities, and are opened for extended hours. I would also use a portion of the money to provide extended library hours, in the evenings and on the weekends.

Brooks (D): The Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund presents an enormous opportunity for the District – both near and long term - and I will be fully committed to ensuring that available funds go towards appropriate government services. With one of the highest lung cancer incidence and mortality rates in the nation, there is no doubt the District needs to make certain we fully finance initiatives that will turn this statistic around and save the lives of countless Washingtonians.

Brown (D): The annual \$60 million revenue would be enough to support the debt service on a roughly \$1.2 billion bond. Public school advocates estimate that it will cost \$2 billion to completely renovate and modernize our public schools. We could cover more than half of the cost of modernization and renovation by simply leveraging the Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to create a \$1.2 billion school modernization and renovation program. I would also require that contractors working on school construction contracts hire at least 51% D.C. residents and create job training and apprenticeship programs on their construction sites.

Ross (S-G): The best use of the funds would be to help cut the cost and save time in the effort to rebuild all of our public schools.

Schwartz (R): I believe all available dollars in the Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund should go to health-related areas. As we considered how this Trust Fund should be set up, I wanted half of the money invested so that District health programs could be assured a constant revenue stream from the interest earned. Unfortunately, we keep being forced to use the principal for overspending agencies and those that do not keep proper records to get Medicaid reimbursements. The Executive needs to do a better job with reimbursements and in keeping District agencies' spending in check so that Fund monies may be used as intended.

WARD 2 COUNCIL MEMBER RACE

Candidates for this office:

(Candidates whose names are in a lighter typeface did not submit a response.)

- ✓ Jack Evans (Democrat)
- ✓ **Jay Marx (Statehood-Green)**

Question #1: Affordable Housing

The District has lost a great deal of affordable housing in recent years. Reasons include private economic development, HOPE VI conversions, the loss of Project-based Section 8 properties through termination, repayment and opt-outs, and private landlords choosing not to take housing vouchers. How do you think D.C. can build and preserve affordable housing and maintain culturally and economically diverse neighborhoods?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): Questions 1-4 are all intrinsically related. Generally, Affordable Housing is part and parcel of a culturally and economically diverse neighborhood. If we value our diversity, and we do, then we should foster and appreciate affordable housing in every neighborhood. The tacit NIMBY assumption that Affordable Housing automatically attracts crime and other social ills to a neighborhood is elitist and/or racist. The city must provide incentives—both carrots and sticks—to develop and preserve affordable housing for all citizens. We should keep in mind that the definition of Affordable Housing—and who is eligible for it—is arbitrary and debatable. DC's....

Question #2: Rent Control

The District's rent control law is up for renewal in 2005. Would you support reauthorization of the law and what changes, if any, would you propose to it?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): Generally rent control is necessary, though we need to take a serious look at how well DC's rent control laws have really worked, and how well they actually protect tenants. Current loopholes in the Rental Housing Act allow rent ceilings to be thousands of dollars higher than current rent charged; we must tie rent ceilings closer to actual rents. Of course, tenants should have right of first refusal on all sales of all or part of the buildings they occupy.

Question #3: Homelessness

Homelessness in the District has increased 17% since 2001. Now, roughly 8,253 men, women, and children are homeless on any given day. How would you improve how the city provides shelter, housing and services to people who are homeless?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): If our city decides to make solving homelessness a true priority, then we can do it. First, we must offer as many ways and incentives possible for people *not* to be homeless. Shelters are only part of the solution, but for a start, homeless shelters should be located where homeless people actually are, and they should have space that remains open during the day so people are not forced out to wander the streets. Ultimately, effective help for the homeless depends on our societal commitment to understand and alleviate the often complex collection of circumstances—availability of affordable housing, employment....

Question #4: NIMBY (Not in My Backyard)

Especially as more economic development takes place in the city, it becomes harder to find sites for homeless shelters, group homes, and even affordable housing. How would you make sure that these services can be offered in a community-based setting? Please address the problem of resident resistance to such facilities being opened in their neighborhoods.

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): If we offer these important but sometimes problematic services in more neighborhoods (“share the burden, spread the wealth”) then we can decrease the concentration of lower-income services, and perhaps we can help residents see how such facilities can really be community assets. Making the buildings that house such services beautiful would be a good start—DC badly needs less ugly development.

Question #5: Support for Immigrants

Close to 13% of the District’s residents are immigrants. How would you improve services for immigrants living in D.C., especially with regard to jobs, housing, and language access?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): I would work to let immigrants—and all city residents—vote in city-wide elections. (But, ultimately, it is not the city’s job to provide for immigrants from other countries any more than it’s our responsibility to take care of American immigrants from other states.) Out of general principles I support full language access: we’d be more true to the ideals of America if our capital city could welcome and provide some services for every resident—permanent or temporary—in every language. (At the very least, online translations of public information should be available—and should not be that expensive or difficult.)

Question #6: Prisoner Reentry

Every year, more than 2,500 men and women return to D.C. from jails and prisons. What strategies would you pursue to help these residents reintegrate into their community? Please address access to jobs, housing, and treatment programs.

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): Briefly, I would make sure that there are such programs, and that they are sufficiently supported and funded to be effective. To the extent that effective programs already exist, I would learn about them and seek to replicate them. Otherwise, I am wide open to trying new solutions to such stubborn challenges, and would be happy to work with those who have innovative answers. Much of this work should ideally be done before prisoners return and reintegrate; once back, they must have opportunity to succeed.

Question #7: Juvenile Justice

The D.C. Council recently approved the closing of Oak Hill, the controversial juvenile detention facility in Laurel, Maryland. What system of juvenile detention do you propose to replace Oak Hill? Please include how you would address any community opposition to smaller, neighborhood-based group homes.

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): To “address community opposition,” I would go to the affected communities, converse with the residents and realize their concerns. I’m sorry I don’t honestly know very much about this subject. I do know that there are many in the community and country who have studied the issue exhaustively and have genuine practical knowledge about various solutions. I would work to bring those with this knowledge together with those in opposition--taking the time and energy necessary to educate, protect and engage the whole community--so there is positive feeling toward a given facility and a shared community stake in success.

Question #8: Affordable Child Care

The District government has only enough funding to cover 40% of the 31,500 children eligible for subsidized child care and related services in FY 2005. As a result, many low-income working families cannot find affordable child care. What would you do to ensure that child care is available to all families?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): Why is the funding level set at only 40%? By what means is the program subsidized? How long before we fully commit the funding to develop our future—our children?! It really does “take a village” to raise a child; we have a village of 600,000 people strong, and child care is critical to many of our working residents of all economic levels. We need not accept last-class expectations for minimal services—why not make DC a nationwide model for safe, affordable childcare availability? What if UDC expanded its teaching program to open child care “teaching clinics” across the city?

Question #9: Public Schools

Recognizing that there are many city agencies providing services to the District's children, what steps would you take in your oversight and policy role to promote collaboration to enhance school outcomes? Please include your ideas for ensuring that the Superintendent, the Board of Education, the City Council, and the Mayor all work as a team to raise academic achievement.

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): I would sit in on meetings, listen especially to parents and teachers, as well as success stories from other cities, and back the best available solutions. We should prepare to invest more money into our public schools. As for “teamwork,” sure, that’s a best case scenario, but is the object to promote harmony and collaboration or is it to IMPROVE THE SCHOOLS? I think the latter, so the strategy I’d support would be to identify the strongest ideas—traditional and innovative—and start working to implement them. The “collaboration” will follow.

Question #10: Foster Care Transition

Young people raised in foster care often are not prepared to be on their own at age 21, when they must leave the foster care system. What programs would you support to help foster care youth aged 18-21 make the transition from foster care to independent adulthood?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): Free education at UDC for DC High School graduates. Consider extending foster care support for a few years. Consider a small stipend or supplemental income for low-income young adult district residents. Mostly, develop or re-invigorate employment programs. What about a DC Conservation Corps (DCCC) to provide training and support for those who need it while enhancing our civic infrastructure?

Question #11: Youth Recreation/Jobs

Young people between the ages of 14 - 21 report there are not enough recreational and job opportunities for them in D.C., especially during the summer. What would you do to increase recreational, job training and job opportunities for youth?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): For one, we could FUND THEM. Recreation is different than jobs, but they are linked: there is much potential work in providing expanded recreational opportunities. There are lots of possible job programs for DC residents of all ages—recreation, construction, public art, landscaping—all that is missing is some strategic planning, THE FUNDING, and a mandate to implement. By the way, one question for the incumbent: What has become of DC's Employment Center—once proudly sited on Pennsylvania Ave, now a parking lot?

Question #12: Minimum Wage

The D.C. minimum wage is currently \$6.15 an hour, which does not provide most minimum wage workers with a sufficient income to support a family living in the District. What level do you propose for a D.C. minimum wage and why?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): How about \$11.00 an hour, just for the conversations that it would start and the possibilities it would open for the hard-working people who really make our city run? It is insulting to expect people in this city to live on \$6.15 an hour, and anyone who doesn't think so should actually have to work for that wage. That said, consider that unless higher wages are somehow subsidized by the government, high minimum wages may depress employment availability and can be a genuine hardship for businesses—especially small businesses. A balance must be struck.

Question #13: Unemployment Compensation

Currently, the average amount of unemployment compensation that D.C. workers receive is \$241 per week. In addition, payments end after 26 weeks regardless of whether the worker has found a new job. What do you believe is an appropriate level for unemployment benefits, both as to payments and as to the length of eligibility?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): Since many of the unemployed are still seeking work after their unemployment compensation is exhausted, it seems that a half-year of coverage is not long enough. Recently, Congress decreed a 3 month extension; there could be a variable extension period depending on unemployment figures for our area (or nationwide). Further, we can give people the incentives, training and opportunity to work. DC can and should have more jobs, and we should be proud to provide them. Imagine if our city committed collectively to basic employment and a living wage for everyone willing to work!

Question #14: Primary Health Care

All D.C. residents with incomes below 200% of poverty are eligible for public health care benefits through Medicaid or through the Alliance. However, many residents still face obstacles in obtaining the health care coverage for which they are eligible because they do not receive health plan information or understand how to apply for benefits. Also, it is very hard for people who receive Medicaid to recertify their benefits, which results in many of them losing coverage for a period of time. Some people do not understand that they may continue to be eligible for Medicaid when their earnings increase or they lose TANF. How will you ensure that all D.C. residents access their public health benefits and obtain preventive and primary health care?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): First, we could ADVERTISE the fact of its availability. We must obviously make sure the people who are eligible, know it. More information centers should be set up—where the people who need the information live. And putting information on websites is not nearly enough—the “digital divide” is real, and those who need information the most are usually the least likely to have electronic information access. Clinics! Why not the 100+ primary and preventative care clinics the mayor promised when he steamrolled DC General? Why not make expand UDC’s health program, and let a new, state-of-the-art DC General collaborate....

Question #15: Substance Abuse Treatment

Substance abuse affects 1 in 9 District residents, including a high percentage of teenagers and people with families. What would you do to increase the number of slots in prevention and intervention programs?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): First, which substances? Alcohol? Cocaine? Crack? Crystal Meth? Tobacco? Different substance problems have different causes, affect different populations, and require different solutions—it is important to be specific. Meanwhile, while increased funding is one obvious remedy, I would also work to create incentives for private and/or “faith-based” concerns to expand successful prevention/intervention program slots or to create new ones. Thinking creatively, what if we asked people in intervention programs, as part of their treatment, to help teach people in prevention programs? We obviously have a vested interest in finding solutions to a need that includes some 11% of our residents.

Question #16: People with Disabilities

What programs would you support or propose to ensure that all D.C. residents with disabilities have access to support services, health care, and housing?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): Available and accessible transportation would certainly help access to support services, as would more fully available information, like a central location to telephone for such information. Also, any housing on public land must include a percentage of units suitable for disabled people. (This could be a requirement of inclusionary zoning.) Working with the Presidential Task Force for the Employment of Adults with Disabilities (PTFEAD) helped me realize how much the disabled really contribute to our society--and economy—if they are just given adequate access and support.

Question #17: Secondhand Smoke

Legislation is pending in the D.C. Council that would ban smoking in workplaces -- including offices, restaurants, and bars -- to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke. What is your position on this legislation and why?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): Offices, ok. Restaurants, maybe. Bars, I don't think so, but I would need to read the legislation. People on both sides should learn more about this issue and weigh in, but there is a civil liberties issue at stake here as well as the health question. In general, outright bans rub my libertarian streak the wrong way. Children and the allergic must be protected, and people in public spaces have a right to smoke-free air, but people also have a fundamental right to recreate as they choose—which includes the right to smoke where it is permitted, or to permit....

Question #18: Open Government

Public participation in the civic process requires that meetings and other government actions are open to the public with adequate advance notice. It also requires that clear and accurate information about the budget and other government decisions are readily available. What policies would you support to make the workings of government more open and inclusive?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): "Sunshine is the best disinfectant;" and transparency is the best weapon against corruption. Adequate public notice is key—detailed agendas must be required, well in advance, in print and on the web. I support a very public budget development process and transparent accounting for all city income and expenses. If elected,, I will ensure publication (on my own website, if necessary) of all the budget and actual numbers to which I am privy. Also, the current "charette" charade, in vogue with Office of Planning, which purports to solicit "public input" but actually ignores public will in favor of the schemes....

Question #19: Tax Parity Act

Income tax cuts under the Tax Parity Act, which were suspended in 2002, are scheduled to take effect again in 2005. These tax cuts will cost the District \$141 million per year, mostly to benefit D.C.'s higher-income residents. What are your views on whether these income tax reductions should take effect?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): Forget it. My incumbent opponent co-wrote and pimped the egregiously recessive Tax Parity Act, which is another reminder that "parity" is not necessarily "fairness." D.C. should have an unapologetically progressive tax base, period. We should scrap this act, re-institute equitable progressive income taxation in the District, pass a Commuter Tax so out-of-staters pay fairly for the

services they use every day, and re-evaluate property taxes in progressive terms as well.

Question #20: Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund

In 1999, the District of Columbia created a Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to manage its share of funds received under a national settlement with the tobacco industry. D.C.'s fund now totals roughly \$60 million per year. Under the tobacco trust fund legislation, half of all funds received must be saved for future needs. The remaining half can be used for new or expanded services, including health, education, and social services. How would you propose to use the available funds?

Candidate Answers:

Marx (S-G): DC Scores, an afterschool Youth Development program that combines soccer and creative writing, is partially funded by the Tobacco Settlement Fund and is an excellent example of one direction such funds can go. Until it stops, \$30 million a year can go to the chronically underfunded issues mentioned above, including: Affordable Child Care, Public Schools, Youth Recreation & Jobs, Primary Health Care, Substance Abuse Treatment, and Secondhand Smoke. But how long does this tobacco windfall last? DC must always look towards a sustainable future.

WARD 4 COUNCIL MEMBER RACE

Candidates for this office:

- ✓ Adrian Fenty (Democrat)

Question #1: Affordable Housing

The District has lost a great deal of affordable housing in recent years. Reasons include private economic development, HOPE VI conversions, the loss of Project-based Section 8 properties through termination, repayment and opt-outs, and private landlords choosing not to take housing vouchers. How do you think D.C. can build and preserve affordable housing and maintain culturally and economically diverse neighborhoods?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): As the Co-Chair of the Council's Special Committee on a Comprehensive Housing Strategy for the District of Columbia, I am working hard to ensure that affordable housing should not simply be a component of the fast-paced revitalization of the city, but the driving force behind it. I have pushed for more affordable housing in Ward 4, and affordable options are beginning to make their way to the market.

Question #2: Rent Control

The District's rent control law is up for renewal in 2005. Would you support reauthorization of the law and what changes, if any, would you propose to it?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): In 2003 I introduced the Rent Control Rent Increase Act to reauthorize rent control. I look forward to its reauthorization being a component of the comprehensive housing strategy.

Question #3: Homelessness

Homelessness in the District has increased 17% since 2001. Now, roughly 8,253 men, women, and children are homeless on any given day. How would you improve how the city provides shelter, housing and services to people who are homeless?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): A comprehensive approach is needed to combat the complex problem of homelessness. We must expect more from the city's social service agencies, so that services are more available to those in need and that there is better coordination among agencies. One of the most urgent problems facing Ward 4 and the District as a whole is affordable housing. It is imperative that we continue efforts to provide the city with more affordable housing options and neighborhood revitalization.

Question #4: NIMBY (Not in My Backyard)

Especially as more economic development takes place in the city, it becomes harder to find sites for homeless shelters, group homes, and even affordable housing. How would you make sure that these services can be offered in a community-based setting? Please address the problem of resident resistance to such facilities being opened in their neighborhoods.

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): The District needs a balance of services in neighborhoods. I favor community-based services provided in small, well-managed residential facilities, as I proposed in the Blue Ribbon Juvenile Justice and Youth Rehabilitation Act I introduced. As the District provides these services we must also protect and support our neighborhoods throughout the District.

Question #5: Support for Immigrants

Close to 13% of the District's residents are immigrants. How would you improve services for immigrants living in D.C., especially with regard to jobs, housing, and language access?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): I am proud of my service on the Human Rights Latino Affairs and property management Sub-Committee. Earlier this year the Council enacted the Language Access Act, which I co-sponsored, to provide multi-lingual services to District residents. I also support strengthening apprenticeship programs especially within the technology sector.

Question #6: Prisoner Reentry

Every year, more than 2,500 men and women return to D.C. from jails and prisons. What strategies would you pursue to help these residents

reintegrate into their community? Please address access to jobs, housing, and treatment programs.

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): Apprenticeship programs can teach adults new skills and can provide new job opportunities. I especially favor the programs that focus on the technology sectors, so that ex-offenders have opportunities to share in the area of greatest job growth. Furthermore, I support small community based residential facilities that do not stigmatize those attempting to turn their lives around. Finally, with better council oversight community based treatment providers would be more adept to serving their client.

Question #7: Juvenile Justice

The D.C. Council recently approved the closing of Oak Hill, the controversial juvenile detention facility in Laurel, Maryland. What system of juvenile detention do you propose to replace Oak Hill? Please include how you would address any community opposition to smaller, neighborhood-based group homes.

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): The District must improve the services we provide our youth. We need a comprehensive approach that coordinates social services agencies with schools, provides more supervised recreational activities and after school programs, and proactively works to keep youth away from crime and gangs. I authored the Blue Ribbon Juvenile Justice and Youth Rehabilitation Act of 2004, in which I advocated for the closure of the Oak Hill Youth Center. That recommendation was accepted by the Council, and I will work to implement the remaining aspects of this bill so that we can prevent juvenile crime, rather than simply punish it.

Question #8: Affordable Child Care

The District government has only enough funding to cover 40% of the 31,500 children eligible for subsidized child care and related services in FY 2005. As a result, many low-income working families cannot find affordable child care. What would you do to ensure that child care is available to all families?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): Quality child care is extremely important, and I support efforts to widen its availability in the District. I would support proposals that maximize

Federal assistance for child care, as well as partnerships between the District government and community groups to help fill the gap in affordable providers.

Question #9: Public Schools

Recognizing that there are many city agencies providing services to the District's children, what steps would you take in your oversight and policy role to promote collaboration to enhance school outcomes? Please include your ideas for ensuring that the Superintendent, the Board of Education, the City Council, and the Mayor all work as a team to raise academic achievement.

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): It is imperative that we improve Council oversight of DCPS. DCPS is plagued with poor management as well as a preponderance of social and economic factors that impede academic success. I will work with the new superintendent to ensure quality education for all. I support a publicly accountable School Board, and I look forward to a renewed spirit of cooperation between the School Board, the Council, and Mayor's office. Political fights and squabbling over power have only hurt, not helped, our children. Now more than ever, we must have a spirit of honesty, openness, and cooperation to achieve the reforms....

Question #10: Foster Care Transition

Young people raised in foster care often are not prepared to be on their own at age 21, when they must leave the foster care system. What programs would you support to help foster care youth aged 18-21 make the transition from foster care to independent adulthood?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): The community must work in partnership with the young adults and their foster parents to ease the transition to life as an active member of the community. Businesses could offer mentoring opportunities to these young adults to help them prepare to enter the workforce, and if necessary, the District could incentivize these efforts to increase interest. Such mentoring programs should start well before foster children reach the age of 18.

Question #11: Youth Recreation/Jobs

Young people between the ages of 14 - 21 report there are not enough recreational and job opportunities for them in D.C., especially during the summer. What would you do to increase recreational, job training and job opportunities for youth?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): I am proud to list several projects I have brought to Ward 4 that provide positive alternatives to youth. The Emery Recreation Center recently reopened after a complete renovation. The Takoma Aquatic Center will be the largest recreation facility in the District with an Olympic-sized pool when it opens early next year. Riggs LaSalle will also be underway soon. I have also called on the Mayor to fully fund the Summer Youth Employment Program.

Question #12: Minimum Wage

The D.C. minimum wage is currently \$6.15 an hour, which does not provide most minimum wage workers with a sufficient income to support a family living in the District. What level do you propose for a D.C. minimum wage and why?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): I support a living wage that is fiscally responsible for the District. Increased costs to employers may be made up in the long-run by a healthier, more vibrant, more diverse, more stable community of wage earners. I plan to work with my colleagues on the Council on the recently introduced legislation to gradually increase the minimum wage.

Question #13: Unemployment Compensation

Currently, the average amount of unemployment compensation that D.C. workers receive is \$241 per week. In addition, payments end after 26 weeks regardless of whether the worker has found a new job. What do you believe is an appropriate level for unemployment benefits, both as to payments and as to the length of eligibility?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): We should increase the amount an individual can earn, while collecting unemployment benefits. Working families must be able to subsist during a temporary period of unemployment, and we should allow that to supplement their benefits to make ends meet.

Question #14: Primary Health Care

All D.C. residents with incomes below 200% of poverty are eligible for public health care benefits through Medicaid or through the Alliance. However, many residents still face obstacles in obtaining the health care

coverage for which they are eligible because they do not receive health plan information or understand how to apply for benefits. Also, it is very hard for people who receive Medicaid to recertify their benefits, which results in many of them losing coverage for a period of time. Some people do not understand that they may continue to be eligible for Medicaid when their earnings increase or they lose TANF. How will you ensure that all D.C. residents access their public health benefits and obtain preventive and primary health care?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): Affordable health insurance remains a concern not only for Ward 4 constituents, but for residents across this city. Last year, the city failed to obtain all the Medicaid reimbursements due from the federal government because of administrative failures. The Council must conduct better oversight of the Department of Health. The District government and private healthcare service providers must also place a greater emphasis on preventative medical care for the uninsured and the underinsured. I opposed the closure of DC General Hospital, and I am concerned that the DC Healthcare Alliance is not performing well as a replacement.

Question #15: Substance Abuse Treatment

Substance abuse affects 1 in 9 District residents, including a high percentage of teenagers and people with families. What would you do to increase the number of slots in prevention and intervention programs?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): The Juvenile Justice bill I introduced promotes measures that will help the District to better teach alternatives and provide needed treatment to youth. I also adamantly opposed the closing of DC General which treated many of the District's substance abusers.

Question #16: People with Disabilities

What programs would you support or propose to ensure that all D.C. residents with disabilities have access to support services, health care, and housing?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): The Council must perform its oversight role to ensure that all District agencies are doing all they can and are already required to do to satisfy the

needs of people with disabilities. I support better oversight of the DC Public Schools in the area of placement of children with disabilities.

Question #17: Secondhand Smoke

Legislation is pending in the D.C. Council that would ban smoking in workplaces -- including offices, restaurants, and bars -- to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke. What is your position on this legislation and why?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): The number of DC residents affected by smoke related illnesses, high cancer, and diabetes are alarming and by many indicators the highest in the nation. I co-introduced the Smokefree Workplaces Act of 2003 specifically to prevent the exposure to second hand smoke, which is a cause of such diseases as lung cancer, heart disease, and respiratory disease, in healthy non-smokers and to allow for a clean and healthy environment and workplace for my constituents.

Question #18: Open Government

Public participation in the civic process requires that meetings and other government actions are open to the public with adequate advance notice. It also requires that clear and accurate information about the budget and other government decisions are readily available. What policies would you support to make the workings of government more open and inclusive?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): I fully support DC's Sunshine laws which should be enforced properly, and I also encourage public participation in Government.

Question #19: Tax Parity Act

Income tax cuts under the Tax Parity Act, which were suspended in 2002, are scheduled to take effect again in 2005. These tax cuts will cost the District \$141 million per year, mostly to benefit D.C.'s higher-income residents. What are your views on whether these income tax reductions should take effect?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): The Council must work to reduce the tax burden on residents and businesses, but not at the expense of our neediest citizens. I was one of five Councilmembers who attempted to reign in the Mayor's budget growth. The District government needs to make certain that we live within our means which includes a responsible budget.

Question #20: Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund

In 1999, the District of Columbia created a Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to manage its share of funds received under a national settlement with the tobacco industry. D.C.'s fund now totals roughly \$60 million per year. Under the tobacco trust fund legislation, half of all funds received must be saved for future needs. The remaining half can be used for new or expanded services, including health, education, and social services. How would you propose to use the available funds?

Candidate Answers:

Fenty (D): I would support programs targeted to educate youth about the importance of healthy lifestyle choices, especially the dangers of tobacco use.

WARD 7 COUNCIL MEMBER RACE

Candidates for this office:

(Candidates whose names are in a lighter typeface did not submit a response.)

- ✓ **Kevin Chavous (Democrat)**
- ✓ Donna Daniels (Democrat)
- ✓ **Vincent Gray (Democrat)**
- ✓ **Almetia Hairston-Hamilton (Democrat)**
- ✓ Mary Jackson (Democrat)
- ✓ James Johnson, Jr. (Democrat)
- ✓ Steven Pettus (Democrat)
- ✓ **Michele Tingling-Clemmons (Statehood-Green)**
- ✓ **Jerod Tolson (Republican)**

Question #1: Affordable Housing

The District has lost a great deal of affordable housing in recent years. Reasons include private economic development, HOPE VI conversions, the loss of Project-based Section 8 properties through termination, repayment and opt-outs, and private landlords choosing not to take housing vouchers. How do you think D.C. can build and preserve affordable housing and maintain culturally and economically diverse neighborhoods?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): The District can and has aided in building and preserving affordable housing by facilitating access to the housing production trust fund. The Council has preserved an income stream to the housing production trust fund by transferring a percentage of recordation and transfer tax revenue to the specific purpose of aiding affordable housing providers to build and maintain affordable housing units in the city. Also, the Council's special committee on housing policy, of which I am a member works to ensure that Council oversight of affordable housing remains in the forefront of economic development initiatives.

Gray (D): I recognize the impact of gentrification on urban areas in the nation. Zoning laws should be utilized to impose requirements on new developments to include affordable housing. The District of Columbia should continue to fund the Housing Production Trust Fund as a way of subsidizing housing to ensure it's affordable. The Fort Dupont Commons housing project, developed through the leadership of the Washington Interfaith Network, is an example of what can be done. This attractive, soundly-built housing, developed in a key part of southeast Washington, is being sold for prices ranging from \$120,000 - 184,000 to income levels of \$15,000 - 60,000.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): The District is experiencing a development boom downtown and throughout strategic areas of the city. That's good! However, it is not enough! D.C. must coordinate public and private resources in designated communities to establish mixed housing for middle income and low-income residents with attractive commercial and social resources. The goal will be to jump start communities in demonstrating that diverse populations could successfully intermingle in the targeted neighborhoods.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): Affordable housing units should be replaced 1:1; seniors, the disabled, families, and other low-income tenants should be helped to stay able in their housing and neighborhoods, not tricked or priced out by new rules requiring impeccable credit rather than giving credit/equity for time spent as a good tenant. District leadership should establish the required percentage of affordable units for new development, and aggressively protect them. District leaders should (and I will) work with community fair housing advocates like Linda Leaks, Terry Lynch, Janet Brown, Lester Cuffie, and others working with low-income tenants/homeowners to help restore, maintain and expand affordable housing.

Tolson (R): The government needs to make efforts to extend tax credits to developers of low-income housing. With sky rocketing property values it can be challenging to find developers willing to pass up big projects downtown and in upper Northwest to develop low-income housing East of the River. I want to implement a vocational program that trains potential residents to work on construction sites and instills a sense of community and ownership.

Question #2: Rent Control

The District's rent control law is up for renewal in 2005. Would you support reauthorization of the law and what changes, if any, would you propose to it?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): Yes I support renewal of the rent control laws. As for changes, I will listen to and work with housing advocates to ensure that their concerns are addressed during the reauthorization process.

Gray (D): I support continuation of rent control. I also support some form of indexing that would allow rental rates to keep pace with rates of inflation so a disincentive to landlords renting their property does not result from capping the amount they can charge. This, in turn, would keep the available housing inventory up. We've all seen the effects of absentee landlords and abandoned houses, and we should ensure it is more financially advantageous for landlords to rent their property rather than let it languish because restrictions that might create a perverse incentive to leave property vacant.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): I would vote for the reauthorization of the District's rent control and would propose that the Executive Branch provide bi-annual progress reports on the Executive Branch's enforcement of the Tenants' Rights to Information Act of 2002.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): As a lifelong renter (until 7 years ago), I fully support reauthorization of the rent control law, with some stronger provisions to protect renters. There need to be stronger rules safeguarding: the tenant's 'right of first refusal'; tenants from excessive increases that include rent rollback provisions; rent-controlled apartments from losing their protected status; and many others. I would work with rent control advocates to develop more specific proposals that protect and value tenants.

Tolson (R): I support reauthorization of the rent control law. With rising property values resulting in increased property taxes we should examine the amount of tax credits building owners receive. The rise in property values is not proportionate to income levels. And this creates a dilemma for property owners, which in turn trickles down to tenants. Tax credits for property owners must be examined as a viable means to offset the need to raise rent to cover increased expenses such as property taxes.

Question #3: Homelessness

Homelessness in the District has increased 17% since 2001. Now, roughly 8,253 men, women, and children are homeless on any given day. How would you improve how the city provides shelter, housing and services to people who are homeless?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): A multifaceted approach to homelessness is required. The homeless community is not monolithic--it needs additional government intervention and collaboration with existing providers and advocates. Finding and increasing resources within the government and the private sector, consideration of alternative uses of District assets and revisions to existing policies are all needed to address the short-term and long term housing needs. Matching the self-professed needs for shelter through the collaboration of public and private sector providers and providing more affordable housing as well as jobs and where needed, social service assistance will reduce the number of homeless people in the District.

Gray (D): The homes women with children can afford are rapidly disappearing in the District and thus, many end up homeless. Many are former public housing residents, and Hope VI has resulted in a net reduction of nearly 1,500 units, and many of the new units are not occupied by former public housing residents. I

support building more multi-family dwellings and owner-occupied housing, and single-room occupancy housing for singles who are homeless. We also must recognize these residents require wrap-around support services to maintain housing. Housing for the homeless in the absence of health and social services is a prescription for failure.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): I do not have the answer. There is no control over the influx of homeless people arriving in the city. Once I win, I will meet with the city representatives to discuss their plans for improvement. I will meet and listen to homeless people throughout the city to hear their views how best to improve their situation.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): I would begin by restoring and expanding Emergency Assistance, recognizing that it is far less expensive to help people stay in their homes than to get them off the street. We should look at other cities with model programs to support housing and services to our residents who are or have become homeless. We must also greatly increase the extent of mental health services available to our homeless citizens who need the support. We also need to review these numbers, since in 1988, we had 15,000 homeless residents, with no substantial program to reduce homelessness in that time.

Tolson (R): Given the state of property values in DC and with space being at a premium in the District, we should explore less expensive property alternatives in Maryland and Virginia to house and shelter the homeless.

Question #4: NIMBY (Not in My Backyard)

Especially as more economic development takes place in the city, it becomes harder to find sites for homeless shelters, group homes, and even affordable housing. How would you make sure that these services can be offered in a community-based setting? Please address the problem of resident resistance to such facilities being opened in their neighborhoods.

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): Resisting community based facilities is a reaction to the quality of services provided. Improving District oversight of providers that are paid from District revenues for group homes and social services will reduce the resistance of neighboring residents. Providing higher quality services to consumers and addressing the needs of existing residents for safer facilities can lead to positive perceptions of community based facilities. All residents want the same high quality neighborhoods, therefore dispersion of well-run community based residential facilities throughout the city will assist in neighborhood stability rather than destabilize certain neighborhood due to the concentration of facilities in one location.

Gray (D): The NIMBY syndrome as strong as it's ever been. People with disabilities face somewhat less opposition due to the Fair Housing Amendments Act. People in the juvenile and criminal justice systems face a huge challenge. A needs analysis of those requiring group placements should be conducted followed by a comprehensive city-wide plan. A city Office of Community-Based Facilities, responsible for knowing where homes are located and providing support to gain acceptance, should be reestablished. Family-type creative options for out of home care are needed. Group homes and large congregate care facilities will not be readily accepted in the current environment.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): There must be open dialogue between the government and the community about the need for responsible-run community-based facilities. There is no equitable placement of facilities throughout the community. Too many of community-based facilities are opening up in distressed neighborhoods with no regard to the close proximity of schools and other precious community resources like senior citizens. It is unfair and unacceptable. Until government leaders address unfair placement of these facilities, there can be no serious dialogue about promoting community acceptance of the same.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): To offer such services in a community-based setting, it is essential to begin with reaching out to and including the community in the decision. These facilities should be made available in every quadrant of the city, in a process that fairly distributes them, and ensures that the security of each community is maintained as a high priority with adequate resources, without negative impacts on housing values. This will require placing some constraints on banks and lenders while working continually with communities and their leaders, homeless advocates, tenants and the homeless residents themselves to address concerns and provide needed support.

Tolson (R): My experience in talking with local residents is that halfway houses and homeless shelters are viewed as a detriment to the neighborhood. We should target industrial areas for building homeless shelters and group homes. You don't find as many shelters and group homes West of the Park. There is an assumption that this type of facility is better suited East of the River. The fact is that property values are decreased but the problems associated with the group homes and shelters is what concerns residents most. The structure of the programs implemented in the shelters needs to be....

Question #5: Support for Immigrants

Close to 13% of the District's residents are immigrants. How would you improve services for immigrants living in D.C., especially with regard to jobs, housing, and language access?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): I support providing information on education, healthcare and access to jobs and housing for immigrants in their own language so that they can make the transition to full citizenship. The District, as an international city must assist new residents in their integration into the fabric of our community. A greater emphasis on public school education programs that assist English-as-a-second-language learners, and other initiatives, such as multilingual government information will improve services for the District's immigrant population.

Gray (D): Immigrants are a critical and dynamic addition to Washington, DC's economy and culture. The contributions they have made and continue to make mirror those of their American citizen counterparts, and they have as much interest in their communities as any other resident. Thus, I support the goal of giving immigrants opportunities to influence the programs and services that would improve their lives, providing diversity training to District government employees, and offering government information in those languages that reflect the District's population.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): We have a responsibility to aid our immigrants in becoming full and equal participants in our city and communities. I will support a policy of full integration for our immigrants, using our existing agencies, programs and institutions to not only help our immigrants to enter the job market and become financially independent, but assist them as well with career advancement, income parity or entry into a field of prior employment. Our immigrants must move beyond settlement (short-term adaptation), such as citizenship and voting, but need to feel fully integrated by participating in our political parties and in socio-political movements.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): I'd join other Councilmembers to support Voting Rights for All legislation extending right to vote in local elections for 40,000 resident immigrant non-citizens living and paying taxes in the District. I'd prioritize implementation of recent Language Access legislation, especially in city services; require and provide language and culture classes for all city workers through UDC, especially those in public safety, health, and all social services – reducing training costs, supporting UDC, keeping our dollars in the city, enhancing the quality of life and service for all residents. I'd work with immigrant leaders especially in Latino, African, and Asian communities to advise these efforts.

Tolson (R): I believe immigrants are receiving an adequate level of benefits. Being born and raised in DC, I would be remiss if I said that I feel that we need to stabilize aid immigrants in DC and concentrate on fixing the problems our residents have.

Question #6: Prisoner Reentry

Every year, more than 2,500 men and women return to D.C. from jails and prisons. What strategies would you pursue to help these residents reintegrate into their community? Please address access to jobs, housing, and treatment programs.

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): Reentry programs must address the whole individual. The reintegration of individuals must include support for their ties to our community, by providing assistance including social services to strengthen their ability to be law-abiding residents. Housing, treatment programs and jobs should all be organized around supporting the individual's need for community, personal development and self-sufficiency so that the individual receives the interconnectedness and support for doing the right thing from family, friends and associates. Where necessary, individuals must also be given a choice to expand their opportunities for growth through education, and if need be insulation from negative influences.

Gray (D): Most important is to facilitate the assimilation of men and women who are returning from incarceration into normal patterns of life as much as possible. Once released, housing and educational opportunities should be readily available, and job training and access should be provided in order to maximize their chance to succeed upon returning home. We should also create opportunities for ex-offenders to have a positive impact on juveniles and potentially prevent young people from engaging in risky behaviors. Ex-offenders potentially could play a role in working with juvenile auto thieves and other youth who have strayed from a law-abiding path.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): I will fight to establish a pre-release program that plans for housing and employment before release by guarantying jobs and housing (outside the city shelter system) for released prisoners. I will push to redefine the role of the parole officer to move away from the status quo of surveillance (drug testing, electronic monitoring and curfew verification) and back to the role of the service-orientated social worker that matches released prisoners to much needed services, i.e., housing, employment, access to skilled trades, healthcare, drug treatment- and mental health programs.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): I will work with prisoner support groups to craft/restore programs assisting our incarcerated population, including expand educational programs within prisons and jails that house our incarcerated residents, emphasizing literacy, citizenship, college, voter registration. I'd support family visits, help underwrite transportation for visits to help maintain family links and support. I'll work with prisoner advocates to strengthen availability of job training linked to specific jobs, and programs supporting families

of the imprisoned. I'll support efforts to provide the necessary health, dental, substance abuse and mental health treatment, and case management of these citizens both in jail/prison and after release.

Tolson (R): As a small business owner, I have hired employees in halfway houses and living in homeless shelters. I understand that everyone makes mistakes. Small businesses usually employ District residents. The correctional system should work with business owners and the City Council to implement transitional work programs to help residents reintegrate into their communities. Housing will be a problem until we are able to effectively rehabilitate distressed properties East of the River and throughout the District.

Question #7: Juvenile Justice

The D.C. Council recently approved the closing of Oak Hill, the controversial juvenile detention facility in Laurel, Maryland. What system of juvenile detention do you propose to replace Oak Hill? Please include how you would address any community opposition to smaller, neighborhood-based group homes.

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): A juvenile detention system should focus on the family. Guidance from social service providers to teach juveniles alternative decision-making paradigms should be provided. Juvenile detention programs must address the educational, cultural and individual development of the child. A system of juvenile detention that provides a holistic approach to all of the child's need for guidance is preferred to a system that focuses on only one element of the child's growth. When removing the child, group homes should provide a healthy neighborhood environment—including a community that accepts the child as a transitioning human being in need of positive community support.

Gray (D): I support community-based alternatives. It is better to keep young people in their communities, thereby increasing their opportunities to participate in mainstream social, health and educational programs. Many youth in the juvenile justice system come from dysfunctional families and have multiple needs as a result. We need options in addition to traditional group homes to include in-home and family-based care. Clearly, there are some violent offenders that should not be in community-based care because doing so represents imprudent service delivery and a threat to public safety. We should explore regional options for youth who are very difficult to serve.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): I will move away from creating additional jails to lock our children up and look to more innovative solutions to reaching our at-risk and troubled youth who have failed in their home communities - despite the best efforts that their families and community could provide. Taking the boarding

school concept of the SEED school that has developed a curriculum that specializes in educating children in urban areas; I will lead the effort to develop a similar program that helps our children with problems such as emotional disturbance, damaged self-esteem, learning disabilities and the results of negative family and community environments.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): Again, just as in the earlier example regarding dealing with homelessness on a smaller, community-based scale the community must be recognized as a partner, and the homes must be placed operated by trained professionals and located in all quadrants of the city since this is not an isolated, individual problem but a community and family one. All homes, operators and juveniles must be monitored and assisted by persons trained in psychological and vocational rehabilitation. And, there must be sufficient educational programs, employment and recreational activities available to the juveniles, along with investment in successful prevention programs like Time-Dollar Youth Court.

Tolson (R): I am opposed to smaller neighborhood based group homes because they will all be in Wards 7 and 8. I would support exploring venues in Maryland and Virginia. The breakdown with begins with the current lack of accountability in the District Government. Juvenile crime is a result of the lack of education in DC Public Schools.

Question #8: Affordable Child Care

The District government has only enough funding to cover 40% of the 31,500 children eligible for subsidized child care and related services in FY 2005. As a result, many low-income working families cannot find affordable child care. What would you do to ensure that child care is available to all families?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): One initiative is to target subsidized child care to children that are younger than three years old and to place children in pre-Kindergarten programs that will prepare them for entering school. I have increased funding for early childhood education in public schools, by placing children in school, which is free, earlier, the funding for subsidized childcare can go further. In addition, high quality early childhood education through programs such as Head Start pays off in the long run for many working families.

Gray (D): I will work to increase support for child care, which will create a substantial financial reward to the District when parents are able to get a job, earn income and pay taxes. I would encourage employers to help with funding child care. It is in their best interests to assist employees with child care expenses because they can attract and retain more employees. We also need to

expand training for people who want to become child care workers or open a child care center.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): We know that our children’s future success in school depends on their experience during the earliest years of life. It is crucial that we increase funding for quality, affordable childcare. I will be at the forefront in the battle to fight for increased funding of childcare programs for working mothers and families. We have the largest number of single mother’s in Ward 7 and I am committed to work to make sure that these mothers will have affordable childcare, allowing them equal access to new social and economic opportunities.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): I’ll work with community groups like Empower, the Family Support Collaboratives, Foster Grandparents, Head Start and Even Start experts to embrace some of their proactive alternatives to cuts in child care and related services. Additionally, I would encourage large companies to offer child care for employees, support the reopening of UDC’s child care center and program, and support efforts to open schools to children starting at age three, recognizing that this requires a substantial and long-overdue investment in the staff and in renovating the physical structures of our public schools to make them safe and accommodating for young children.

Tolson (R): [no answer provided]

Question #9: Public Schools

Recognizing that there are many city agencies providing services to the District’s children, what steps would you take in your oversight and policy role to promote collaboration to enhance school outcomes? Please include your ideas for ensuring that the Superintendent, the Board of Education, the City Council, and the Mayor all work as a team to raise academic achievement.

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): I have worked aggressively to bring together DCPS and the Mayor’s agencies in the Deputy Mayor for Children Youth and Families, the Superintendent and the Council. I continue to challenge through the special education task force and the State Education Office DCPS and the Mayor to promote collaboration to enhance school outcomes for all of our children. The fruits of this collaborative effort include better outreach to children eligible for free and reduced lunch, better assistance to special education parents and improvements in the programs across agencies that all have the goal of helping our children prosper.

Gray (D): I strongly support locating health and social services in schools, promoting real collaboration. I urge an education summit where the myriad

functions are discussed, a plan developed and a governing Memorandum of Understanding crafted. The education governance structure in the District is murky. The Superintendent should be responsible to the Board. But, the Mayor and City Council also are publicly responsible for education outcomes, and must have an accountability role. Executive branch agencies engaged with education through a MOU would facilitate the Mayor's involvement. The Council's Committee on Education, Recreation and Libraries, needs to more aggressively discharge its oversight function.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): I believe in an elected school board, it is the most profound expression of grassroots democracy. They have kept the schools close to the people, stimulated creative flexibility within schools and adaptability to local community needs, while at the same time working towards equality of opportunity without imposing uniformity. The Board's role should be to establish and oversee policy, not implementation. Implementation should occur at the school through school-based management. Our School Board must have the full confidence of the Mayor and Council and these bodies must partner together to lead change by placing the needs of our children first.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): First, I support a fully elected School Board, fully funded by Council and Mayor; and developing quality special needs school(s) locally. I support restoration of broad-based Adult Education programs and the School's Food Services Program with capacity to produce and provide quality, nutritious meals to schools, childcare, recreation and afterschool, year-round, offering employment, nurturing, and revenue-enhancement. I support "Parents as First Teacher", an innovative program to help parents help their children, and Education for the Future, with DCPS as anchor of academic, vocational, college-bound, and public service academies; offering apprenticeships, free college education at UDC in return for city job, enhancing city tax base.

Tolson (R): I support the creation of Charter Schools and School Vouchers. DC spends the most money per student in the country. Vouchers and Charter Schools ARE NOT a threat to the public school system. As a product of the DC Public School System, I am aware of the lax atmosphere and the lack of accountability in the Public School System. The Superintendent and the Board of Education with along with the City Council and the Mayor need to work with a City like Chicago to find out how they successfully overhauled their school system. The current Administration has done the same....

Question #10: Foster Care Transition

Young people raised in foster care often are not prepared to be on their own at age 21, when they must leave the foster care system. What programs would you support to help foster care youth aged 18-21 make the transition from foster care to independent adulthood?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): Foster children have many opportunities available to them before they reach age 21 that can assist them in transition to independent adulthood. Creating additional programs of surrogate family structures will assist those foster children who may not receive stable placements. Where children seek to attend college, the District provides tuition assistance. Where children seek to enter the labor force, apprentice programs exist. Where children need additional assistance with their lives, there are kindred care circles of outreach programs to extended family members. When these systems work well, they provide a platform to launch foster children into adulthood.

Gray (D): As Executive Director of Covenant House Washington, I have had the opportunity to work with young people struggling with the transition to adulthood with little or no family on which to rely. These youth need 3 things: housing, education and a job. Transitional housing opportunities with varying degrees of independence including a full array of life skills classes should be available. This must be couple with vocational training if they wish to go to work immediately or assistance in pursuing matriculation at a college or university in the vent that is their goal.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): I would require that the Youth Services Administration (YSA) study the feasibility of developing and administering a Foster Care Independence Program that develops services and partnerships that improve outcomes for youth exiting foster care for adult living through the assurance that foster care youth have the opportunity to obtain job training and meaningful employment, and are provided opportunities to participate in post secondary training and education. Every child exiting foster care ought to be afforded a support system that enhances their long-term-self-sufficiency by providing them with the skills, resources, and support to make a successful transition to adulthood.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): I would support programs that are currently effective in supporting foster care youth aged 18-21 and solicit recommendations from Covenant House, Justice for DC Youth, and other advocates who work with youth facing the challenges of emancipation without support to develop the support systems necessary to protect our young people from homelessness, exploitation, unemployment and other problems they too often face. We need to ensure they have the supports they continue to need – homes, jobs, security, education, nurturing, love – and not be party to their being cast out to fend for themselves.

Tolson (R): This problem is not limited to the foster care system. I believe most 21 year olds find themselves unprepared to enter independent adulthood. With a strengthened education infrastructure we will be able to put more students into

college and prepare them to graduate with the skills to land entry-level management positions as opposed to entry-level administrative positions.

Question #11: Youth Recreation/Jobs

Young people between the ages of 14 - 21 report there are not enough recreational and job opportunities for them in D.C., especially during the summer. What would you do to increase recreational, job training and job opportunities for youth?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): I have worked with the Mayor and Councilmember Allen to add additional funding to increase recreation and job opportunities for youth through the Save Our Youth Initiative. In addition, through this last budget cycle I have increased funding for increasing library hours and sought out ways to do more with less by combining programmatic activities across libraries and recreation centers. With the increased emphasis of the District on seeking private sector assistance through the 51% hiring requirements for certain economic development assistance, I expect that opportunities for job training of youth through apprenticeships will increase.

Gray (D): We need to increase the number of subsidized summer youth employment opportunities. Failure to support this program does not save money because the city ends up spending the money, in a number of instances, in the juvenile justice system. It costs the District in excess of \$50,000 per year to keep a youth at Oak Hill. The cost of a summer job is \$2,000 per year per youth. We also need to improve recreational facilities and restore recreation programs that once existed. Many should be supported through parents and volunteers that would serve as group leaders, coaches, etc.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): I will move to change our thinking in regards to recreation centers with an approach that would acknowledge that while swimming and basketball are mainstays, computer access and training must also become so if we are to draw the interest of our youth from the street corners to these safe-havens that will become centers of hope, opportunity and preparation.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): I would propose initiatives to use the enormous contracting and investment power of the District government to meet the needs of its people by encouraging and requiring that companies wishing to do business with the District provide viable employment for youth, both in summer and year-round. I would also engage experts in DC's Department of Parks and Recreation, and some of its alumni to assist with restoring and reinvesting in many of the hallmark programs operated under the city's auspices, like the Roving Leaders program, and the Mayor's Youth Leadership Institute.

Tolson (R): Today's youth are very visual and hands-on. All recreation centers should have computer labs and offer classes (paid and non-paid). I would propose a year-round youth program that offered job training classes in exchange for volunteer services. PG County and Montgomery County offer youth classes and camps at their recreation centers throughout the year. I propose a system that would give youth the opportunity to attend instructional recreational classes for a fee or in exchange for credits earned via volunteering time and service to the recreation center or to the community.

Question #12: Minimum Wage

The D.C. minimum wage is currently \$6.15 an hour, which does not provide most minimum wage workers with a sufficient income to support a family living in the District. What level do you propose for a D.C. minimum wage and why?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): The D.C. minimum wage should be increased. The level should reflect the increases in inflation since the last increase. Indexing the minimum wage to the rate of inflation, may not afford minimum wage workers with assistance when housing and health care costs are rising more rapidly than inflation, therefore the level of the minimum wage should not be set to a fixed rate of growth. Rather, the minimum wage should reflect the labor market realities such that families can survive in the District when people are willing to work.

Gray (D): The District has different wage minimums based on the type of job being performed, as expressed through Wage Orders. While there is no precise formula for estimating minimum wage, TANF, Medicaid, food stamps and WIC benefits, which are targeted at people who have no earnings or whose income is extremely low, equals around \$10 per hour. Therefore, using that as a threshold would be a good place to start. Clearly, \$6.15 per hour is minimal, translating into an annual salary of about \$12,800. Without other means of support, it would be an enormous challenge to exist on such earnings alone.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): I will look into the feasibility of a living wage for the District that will require city service contractors to pay a living wage to its employees. I will fight for a living wage that is based off a real self-sufficiency standard of what it takes to make ends meet and to assess the success of employment and training programs in the District. Further, I would target higher-wage employers to relocate to the District and look to tap into existing federal tax incentive programs that would lure them into economically distressed areas.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): I support and propose that the District adopt a Living Wage standard, to bring the level of compensation up to accommodate the real

cost of raising a family and living in the District. I believe it would only enhance the quality of life in the District for all our citizens, and would recoup vital tax dollars to support the work of the District. As a worker, I believe that we should be paid at a level that supports spending time with our children, in our community, and adequate to meet our needs.

Tolson (R): I propose a minimum wage of \$7.00 an hour. More research needs to be done to determine a “liveable wage” in DC given the growth of the City over the past 2 years.

Question #13: Unemployment Compensation

Currently, the average amount of unemployment compensation that D.C. workers receive is \$241 per week. In addition, payments end after 26 weeks regardless of whether the worker has found a new job. What do you believe is an appropriate level for unemployment benefits, both as to payments and as to the length of eligibility?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): Unemployment compensation should provide flexible assistance to insured workers. More efficient use of existing funds may increase the benefit to unemployed insured workers from the unemployment compensation trust fund. Increasing benefits requires adjusting the balance of the desire to attract stable jobs with the needs of residents during periods of unemployment. Working in partnership with private sector employers to help workers find new jobs quickly must be part of the strategy. Wages during additional training could be included as a benefit to increase the level of unemployment benefits with the costs shared between the old and the new employers.

Gray (D): We should continue to ensure that unemployment benefits are tied to amount of salary earned prior to becoming unemployed. Salary generally reflects standard of living, and this approach ensures benefits are somewhat consonant with that standard, recognizing that unemployment benefits inevitably are lower. When unemployment is high, I support adding another quarter to the benefits period. Because employers bear the burden of paying unemployment benefits, we need to be mindful that the District's unemployment compensation is competitive with surrounding jurisdictions or we risk losing employers to other areas because unemployment costs are so high.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): We must recognize that we are in a recession and in order to help stabilize the economy, we must act to relieve our citizens of suffering here in the District. If elected, I will lead the charge to update the District's Unemployment Insurance benefit levels in order to protect laid off workers 'standard of living.' I will also sponsor legislation that would adopt an

extended benefits trigger that would extend Unemployment Insurance coverage for an additional 13 weeks during a recession.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): I think unemployment benefits should assist working people to continue surviving above a subsistence level for a time period that recognizes the length of time finding new employment requires. I believe that it should last at least a year, and should be higher than \$241 a week, the average, and certainly higher than \$309 a week, the maximum. I will work with experts in the field to propose needed adjustments.

Tolson (R): I believe that 26 weeks is appropriate. My experience with Unemployment Compensation as a recipient and as an employer is that there is no enforcement to ensure that recipients are actively seeking employment. I would propose legislation to amend the Unemployment Compensation law to include mandatory attendance in a class that teaches interviewing skills and resume preparation.

Question #14: Primary Health Care

All D.C. residents with incomes below 200% of poverty are eligible for public health care benefits through Medicaid or through the Alliance. However, many residents still face obstacles in obtaining the health care coverage for which they are eligible because they do not receive health plan information or understand how to apply for benefits. Also, it is very hard for people who receive Medicaid to recertify their benefits, which results in many of them losing coverage for a period of time. Some people do not understand that they may continue to be eligible for Medicaid when their earnings increase or they lose TANF. How will you ensure that all D.C. residents access their public health benefits and obtain preventive and primary health care?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): A public hospital, primary and preventative care clinics and reasonably priced prescription drugs are all components of my strategy. First I am working to ensure D.C. General Hospital opens as soon as possible through a partnership with Howard University Hospital. Second I support the extension of neighborhood clinics as a primary care tool for providing public health benefits that are both preventative care and accessible. Third, through evaluation of existing procedures, I look for ways to make the existing health plan for eligible residents more accessible and less cumbersome. Fourth I work to improve access to pharmacy care at lower cost.

Gray (D): The District needs to establish a separate cabinet level agency, the Department of Health Care Finance to oversee the Medicaid program and possibly include the Alliance as well. DHCF should be imbued with the authority

and autonomy to further extend itself into those population pockets that face obstacles in obtaining and maintaining health care. The department should provide technical assistance to agencies, like Child and Family Services, D.C. Public School System and the Youth Services Agency, which touch the Medicaid populations. I would work with the Insurance Commissioner to provide more aggressive consumer education programs around health insurance and benefits.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): I would push to convert the position of Senior Deputy Director for Health Promotion to that of a Surgeon General (Chief Health Educator) who would be responsible for: (1) giving District residents the best information to improve their health and reduce risk of illness and injury; (2) Closing the gap on health disparities that exist within minority communities. (3) Forging greater efficiency in the utilization of the District, federal, and private resources; (4) Spearheading a DC corps of caseworkers that will fight to eliminate barriers that exist with DC residents tapping into healthcare benefits and other available services.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): I'd work to restore and/or rebuild D.C. General Hospital, DC's public health care system anchor, and require the expansion of its case management system and links with the non-profit clinic system. I would propose that extensive use be made of the radio, TV, and cable TV to advertise these benefits using PSAs. I would further insist and monitor compliance with requirements that ALL staff answering phones and taking inquiries at Medicaid and the Alliance be trained, knowledgeable, informed, polite, answer questions rather than passing, or giving them other numbers to call, and to raise their cultural and linguistic competence.

Tolson (R): Being a candidate I understand the difficulties involved in getting your message out. Community seminars would be a useful tool and a simplified fact sheet. The recertification process should begin in the last year of coverage to ensure that there is no lapse. The Local Small Disadvantaged Business Program experienced the same problem recertifying DC based businesses. We should streamline the recertification process and limit the amount of information required. I was exposed to the intricacies of Medicare and Medicaid when my Grandfather passed and it is not cut and dry.

Question #15: Substance Abuse Treatment

Substance abuse affects 1 in 9 District residents, including a high percentage of teenagers and people with families. What would you do to increase the number of slots in prevention and intervention programs?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): Integration of intervention/prevention programs is necessary to increase the success of substance abuse programs for the addicted and at-risk

individuals served. Integrating substance abuse and other social services into the schools will increase the efficacy of existing programs.

Intervention/prevention should occur sooner with our teenagers. Recognition must be given to the fact that some substance abuse is the fallout from social service programmatic failure. The improvements in the success of the Districts substance abuse prevention and intervention programs requires the District to develop a comprehensive substance abuse strategy that is integrated with the other services provided by the government.

Gray (D): We need to take better advantage of federal opportunities through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency (SAMSHA) and its Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. The District especially needs a comprehensive plan for youth that includes prevention, and out-and in-patient treatment. There should be a close working relationship between the Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration and the Income Maintenance Administration because a number of those who receive cash benefits are substance abusers, which is a huge factor in preventing them from leaving TANF and going to work.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): I would move to better utilize the Central Treatment Facility (CTF). It is currently being used as a jail and should be reverted to its primary purpose – substance abuse treatment. Such a move will increase the number of slots in the District, providing additional slots for prevention and intervention programs for residents struggling with the problem of substance abuse.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): Substance abuse is a means to dull the pains of living, so I've concentrated in other answers on strategies to resolve those pains through effective use of government. Regarding slots in prevention and intervention, first, I propose reopening DC General Hospital; providing more funding for effective treatment programs like RAP, Inc.; and providing funding support for successful prevention programs like NCCPUD (National Capital Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking), LCAT (Latino Council Against Tobacco) offering peer support opposing tobacco and alcohol use by youth; and Time-Dollar Youth Court, internally-recognized juvenile diversion program managing 70% of DC's non-violent youth offenders with peer....

Tolson (R): I think the concentration should be on prevention, which will in turn limit the number of intervention slots. Prevention is an investment but intervention becomes an expense. Most DC residents have been affected by substance abuse either directly or indirectly. The goal is not to increase the number of slots but to prevent needing the spots.

Question #16: People with Disabilities

What programs would you support or propose to ensure that all D.C. residents with disabilities have access to support services, health care, and housing?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): I support providing subsidized housing, assistance with health care bureaucracies and access to support services for the District's disabled residents. The District must ensure that the channels used to reach our disabled residents and the technology adequately assist in providing home-bound individuals with access to all of the available resources. I propose working with the disabled to expand TTY and other technology based programs, and training additional health care providers to be sensitive to the needs of disabled persons for a balance of independence as well as access to District provided programs such as therapeutic recreation facilities.

Gray (D): I heartily support full inclusion for people with disabilities, which translates into according them opportunities to work, be educated, engage in recreation, and live just like people who do not have disabilities. While not a program, more fundamentally, it is an operating principle that creates an expectation services will be available and facilitates an attitude of acceptance and value.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): I support full enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and as a Member of the District Council; I will use my oversight role of the programs and operations of government agencies to ensure that the District government is compliant with the ADA, eliminating barriers to employment, transportation, public accommodations, public services, and telecommunications

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): I would begin by reaching out to Bobby Coward with ADAPT, Marilyn Killingham with University Legal Services Assistive Technology Program, Michelle Hawkins of the Kennedy Institute, Doreen Hodges with AFFIRM, representatives from the Arc, and other experts to gain informed input into proposals and support requested by members of the disability community in the areas of services, health care and housing, as a start, to ensure that any proposals are sufficient to meet the needs of this vital community.

Tolson (R): The current programs being offered need to be evaluated to ensure that DC residents with disabilities find the programs useful.

Question #17: Secondhand Smoke

Legislation is pending in the D.C. Council that would ban smoking in workplaces -- including offices, restaurants, and bars -- to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke. What is your position on this legislation and why?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): As a public health issue, I am concerned that the exposure to secondhand smoke issue is being used to focus attention on the working conditions of some of the most vulnerable members of the labor force. While I do not condone smoking in the workplace, I would much rather ensure that individual workers have an opportunity to earn a living wage, while working, living and paying income taxes in the District. I will work to ensure that health care is not one-sided, nor limited by occupation, then I will determine if the returns for a voluntary ban on smoking is sufficient.

Gray (D): I support a ban on smoking in workplaces including, bars and restaurants. There is substantial evidence that people subjected to second hand smoke are vulnerable to the same diseases as smokers. We should not knowingly support conditions that expose innocent victims to the possibility of contracting illnesses, some of which could be fatal.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): Being a non-smoker, I support the second-hand smoke initiative that prevents the public from exposure to secondhand smoke. However, I believe smokers like every citizen have rights and I do not support an all out ban on smoking in offices, restaurants and bars, as is the case in New York City and the states of California and Massachusetts. I support efforts that provide appropriate space and separate ventilation for smokers, while protecting the health of non-smokers, children and the elderly.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): As an environmentalist and a former smoker myself, I believe that unwilling exposure to secondhand smoke is a public health issue, where the health and well-being of the workers is paramount. I support the position of BREATHE, and recognize that despite the protestations of the business community, data is showing the improvement of health among employees no longer forced to suffer from secondhand smoke.

Tolson (R): I support banning smoking in public places. Montgomery County has had success with similar legislation in spite of fears that it would have a detrimental effect on business revenue.

Question #18: Open Government

Public participation in the civic process requires that meetings and other government actions are open to the public with adequate advance notice. It also requires that clear and accurate information about the budget and other government decisions are readily available. What policies would you support to make the workings of government more open and inclusive?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): I support Council oversight hearings and roundtables to receive public input on decisions by the Council. By providing opportunities for the public to weigh-in on issues confronting the Council, public participation in the workings of government improve our ability as legislators to serve the public. I support policies that provide multiple ways for the public to contact decision makers including, public hearings, meetings and continuing dialogue with my office. I believe that community outreach policies should ensure that the public is educated about the substance as well as the process of governmental decision-making.

Gray (D): I support any policy that requires all decisions that affect public policy to be made in the open with the opportunity for citizens' views to be considered in the course of reaching those decisions.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): I believe in transparency in government. If elected, I know that I serve at the pleasure of the voters and will be responsive to the voters and citizens of Ward 7 – the people who have sent me to City Council to do a job, which is to represent Ward 7. I will lead with the cardinal understanding that government must be accountable to the people to which it serves, refraining from the closed-off back room sorts of activities that leave voters in the dark. I will lead us back-to-the-basics of good, open and responsive government.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): First, data regarding government programs, operations and statistics must be readily available in an easily understandable form, like the former publication INDICES: A Statistical Index to Programs and Services in the District of Columbia produced by former Department of Planning and Development. Second the budget proposals must be available to public at least one week prior to any public hearing and preceded by discussions between agencies and advocates. The persistence of private meetings and decisions that are closed to the public must stop, and I am prepared to break the conspiracy of silence this administration operates under.

Tolson (R): I would propose the use of electronic billboards throughout the Wards and using advertising on the Metro bus stops and in the rail stations. City wide mailings can become costly and often ineffective. The City Council should

work closer with the ANC Commissioners and Civic Associations to ensure that information is disseminated to the communities.

Question #19: Tax Parity Act

Income tax cuts under the Tax Parity Act, which were suspended in 2002, are scheduled to take effect again in 2005. These tax cuts will cost the District \$141 million per year, mostly to benefit D.C.'s higher-income residents. What are your views on whether these income tax reductions should take effect?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): Supporting income tax cuts that weaken the District's ability to provide a safety-net is difficult. While certain elements of the District's tax code provide incentives for the wealthy to move into the District, and wealthy individuals increase, on net, the District's revenue stream, I believe that there are considerations of convenience and access to the District's amenities which limit the need for tax cuts as an engine of sustained economic growth. Rather, reducing taxes under the tax parity act should only occur after the District has adequately provided for the life sustaining needs of residents and has budget surpluses.

Gray (D): The Tax Parity Act represents the largest tax reduction in the history of the District of Columbia. Because of the District's fiscal problems of past years, the tax cuts envisioned by the Tax Parity Act were never implemented. In June, the Council voted to roll back the deed and recordation tax that was always intended to be temporary. DC's citizens have expected the other tax cuts, and if the opportunity is there to roll them back and keep the promise made by the Council, it should be done.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): I strongly oppose the full Implementation of the 1999 Tax Parity Act. I do not support tax cuts that only benefit a few; that is not my idea of tax parity. The District is in a period of fiscal weakness and all future tax reductions due to the Tax Parity Act should be suspended immediately.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): The Tax Parity Act should be repealed. I support hearings to review and adopt proposal of DC Statehood Green Party's Tax Reform Task Force, supported by data from DC's Fiscal Policy Institute to enhance the progressiveness of D.C.'s tax structure by raising tax rate for millionaires and multi-millionaires to bring it in line with the rate of taxes paid by the vast majority of DC's working class residents. This would alleviate the regular budget shortfall brought on by government officials' persistent mismanagement of DC government, the burden of which, according to DCFPI, has fallen disproportionately on the poorest residents.

Tolson (R): I support income tax reductions. Tax cuts do not only benefit higher-income residents, but serve as a stimulus to the economy when residents are allowed to retain more of their income. That income is usually put back into the economy in the form of increased spending or larger purchases. The District has the ability to recoup the tax cut in the form of sales tax.

Question #20: Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund

In 1999, the District of Columbia created a Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to manage its share of funds received under a national settlement with the tobacco industry. D.C.'s fund now totals roughly \$60 million per year. Under the tobacco trust fund legislation, half of all funds received must be saved for future needs. The remaining half can be used for new or expanded services, including health, education, and social services. How would you propose to use the available funds?

Candidate Answers:

Chavous (D): Targeting tobacco dollars for initiatives that improve access to health care and healthy lifestyle information is the highest and best use of tobacco funds. D.C residents with diabetes, high blood pressure and other health and lifestyle issues can benefit directly from the efficient use of these dollars. Using the tobacco settlement dollars to improve the performance of clinics and support the redevelopment of a District sponsored public hospital should occur first and District government should lead in improving access to health care as well as information about the impact of participating in better diets, life-long exercise plans, and smoking-cessation.

Gray (D): Characteristically, prevention and early intervention programs are the first to be under-funded or eliminated. No one would argue they make a huge impact, yet all too often resources are not invested to support the rhetoric. I would work to increase investment in prevention of illnesses occurring at epidemic levels in DC: heart disease, cancer, HIV/AIDS, and diabetes. It is a critical investment in future health of the city because many with these conditions rely on the city for their health care. In addition, funding should be utilized to prevent domestic violence and child abuse and neglect.

Hairston-Hamilton (D): I would propose that these much needed funds be used to fund education, public safety and some health provider strategy for the void the closing of DC General has created.

Tingling-Clemmons (S-G): Bolstered by the tax proposal above, I would propose to meet with those groups who have been monitoring and crafting proposal for the use of the Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund, gain their expertise in crafting specific proposals, and cease the regular raiding of that fund. We want

to use the available funds for an innovative mix of new and expanded services in health, education and social services.

Tolson (R): The available funds should be used to supplement rising prescription drug costs for seniors, and to implement vocational training programs in the public school system. The educational system in the District is failing and requires a major overhaul. We need to establish accountability standards and ensure enforcement of such standards. Today's youth represent tomorrow's leaders.

WARD 8 COUNCIL MEMBER RACE

Candidates for this office:

(candidates whose names are in the lighter typeface did not submit a response)

- ✓ **Sandy Allen (Democrat)**
- ✓ Marion Barry (Democrat)
- ✓ William Lockridge (Democrat)
- ✓ Jacque Patterson (Democrat)
- ✓ R. Joyce Scott (Democrat)
- ✓ Sandra "S.S." Seegars (Democrat)
- ✓ Frank Sewell (Democrat)
- ✓ Cardell Shelton (Republican)

Question #1: Affordable Housing

The District has lost a great deal of affordable housing in recent years. Reasons include private economic development, HOPE VI conversions, the loss of Project-based Section 8 properties through termination, repayment and opt-outs, and private landlords choosing not to take housing vouchers. How do you think D.C. can build and preserve affordable housing and maintain culturally and economically diverse neighborhoods?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): I have always supported affordable housing, As Councilmember I have fought long and hard for the retention of existing, and the creation of additional, affordable housing in the District in general and in Ward Eight in particular. Full funding of the Housing Production Trust Fund is one vehicle to create and conserve affordable housing and economically varied neighborhoods. I have also worked to increase the \$35 million in local Housing Production Trust Fund monies, federal HOME Investment Partnerships Program, Community Development Block Grant funds, and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits that DHCD has in 2005 for developers committed to creating affordable housing.

Question #2: Rent Control

The District's rent control law is up for renewal in 2005. Would you support reauthorization of the law and what changes, if any, would you propose to it?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): I would support reauthorization with significant changes but I would not be in favor of dismantling the system altogether. We must put in place

measures that stabilize our low and moderate income housing market, not damage it. It appears from my review of other cities programs, that strict rent control has a domino effect: (1) tenants in controlled units can't move to more sought-after areas because those units offered for rent are higher-priced; (2) in cities without controls people have an easier time finding reasonably priced rental units than do residents in rent-controlled cities.

Question #3: Homelessness

Homelessness in the District has increased 17% since 2001. Now, roughly 8,253 men, women, and children are homeless on any given day. How would you improve how the city provides shelter, housing and services to people who are homeless?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): I have been an ardent supporter of funding for homeless services programs but I still believe more needs to be done to improve the ability of these programs, the District needs to continue to provide temporary shelter housing, career skills training, and an adequate supply of affordable housing units in order to curb the increase in homeless families. I introduced the Homeless Services Reform Act of 2003, which will provide fair and consistent treatment for the homeless, improve the delivery of services, and create an Interagency Council on Homelessness to improve communication between DHS, APRA, DMH, and DOES.

Question #4: NIMBY (Not in My Backyard)

Especially as more economic development takes place in the city, it becomes harder to find sites for homeless shelters, group homes, and even affordable housing. How would you make sure that these services can be offered in a community-based setting? Please address the problem of resident resistance to such facilities being opened in their neighborhoods.

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): I strongly support providing services within the community-based setting. I believe the public does have the right to be informed before a facility is built next door to them, and that is why I co-sponsored the Notice Requirement for Publicly Funded Building Project Amendment Act of 2003. Often through notice, public misconceptions regarding community-based facilities can be alleviated. However, I want to make it clear that I do not support the use of notice as a mechanism for neighborhood groups who oppose all community residential facilities to harass providers or block efforts to bring needed group homes into the community.

Question #5: Support for Immigrants

Close to 13% of the District’s residents are immigrants. How would you improve services for immigrants living in D.C., especially with regard to jobs, housing, and language access?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): I will continue to work with the other members of the Council to improve healthcare, jobs, housing, and language access for legal immigrants who reside in the District. We are known worldwide as a nation of immigrants and each of us have ancestors who were immigrants once. These individuals work to improve our neighborhoods, help our economy with labor and entrepreneurship, pay taxes, serve in the military and their children attend our public schools. We should not treat them like Congress treats us. We should expand their rights and protections.

Question #6: Prisoner Reentry

Every year, more than 2,500 men and women return to D.C. from jails and prisons. What strategies would you pursue to help these residents reintegrate into their community? Please address access to jobs, housing, and treatment programs.

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): Providing opportunities for ex-offenders, so they do not fall back into a life of crime is of critical importance, particularly in Ward 8. I authored and passed the Health-Care Facility Unlicensed Personnel Criminal Background Check Amendment Act. This law allows many ex-offenders to work in hospitals despite previous convictions, by removing less serious offenses from the list of crimes that banned ex-offenders from employment. The District must still do more to ensure a continuum of treatment services (mental health, substance abuse, HIV medication etc.) and available housing for ex-offenders who are returning to the community.

Question #7: Juvenile Justice

The D.C. Council recently approved the closing of Oak Hill, the controversial juvenile detention facility in Laurel, Maryland. What system of juvenile detention do you propose to replace Oak Hill? Please include how you would address any community opposition to smaller, neighborhood-based group homes.

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): I believe Oak Hill is an outdated facility and best practices indicate that least restrictive settings are preferable. We need a facility for violent juvenile offenders who should not be placed back in the community and that separates incarcerated youth from youths awaiting trial. We also need to design a community-based system of juvenile group homes that are evenly disbursed throughout the District. I recently introduced the Systems of Community Based Care Reform Act of 2004, which focuses on rehabilitation and teaching youth accountability rather than just locking up our youth and providing increased wrap-around supportive services and coordination.

Question #8: Affordable Child Care

The District government has only enough funding to cover 40% of the 31,500 children eligible for subsidized child care and related services in FY 2005. As a result, many low-income working families cannot find affordable child care. What would you do to ensure that child care is available to all families?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): During my years as Chair of the Committee on Human Services, I have been the most vocal advocate on Council for subsidized childcare. I plan to again increase the number of non-traditional (23 hour and weekend) childcare slots by adding funding for over 100 new slots and preserve funding for traditional subsidized child-care slots. In addition, I will preserve funding for the DC Youth Investment Trust Corporation, insuring the continuation of vital after-school and youth enrichment programs to low-income families.

Question #9: Public Schools

Recognizing that there are many city agencies providing services to the District's children, what steps would you take in your oversight and policy role to promote collaboration to enhance school outcomes? Please include your ideas for ensuring that the Superintendent, the Board of Education, the City Council, and the Mayor all work as a team to raise academic achievement.

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): To successfully reform our education system, better operational management is needed, while maintaining the democratic representation for residents and policy making that the school board provides; the Superintendent must be empowered with clear direction, and cross-agency support. However, I strongly believe that there should be an all elected School Board to set

educational policy. The board should address community concerns when formulating and initiating school policy; thus representing the public's voice in public education. The Superintendent would implement the policies and run the day-to-day operations needed to implement the Board's policies.

Question #10: Foster Care Transition

Young people raised in foster care often are not prepared to be on their own at age 21, when they must leave the foster care system. What programs would you support to help foster care youth aged 18-21 make the transition from foster care to independent adulthood?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): We need to intensify and expand upon our existing network of programs focused on education, career skills training, and supportive housing options. Chief among this network is the Child and Family Services Agency Independent Living Program (ILP). The ILP program which includes life skills training, preparation for college and vocational training, payment and support of vocational training and college attendance, counseling, housing locator assistance, specialized training, socialization activities and individualized services, needs to be utilized more effectively.

Question #11: Youth Recreation/Jobs

Young people between the ages of 14 - 21 report there are not enough recreational and job opportunities for them in D.C., especially during the summer. What would you do to increase recreational, job training and job opportunities for youth?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): We need to improve all areas of necessary social services to our youth. Vocational education should be a priority for DCPS; in fact it should be a part of its core curriculum. Many students do not want to go to college, but would rather enter the job market. The Business community and Unions should play a major role in providing programs and internships that would insure employment to DC youth. They should minimally help with training, part-time, full time and summer jobs. In addition, we need to continue constructing new and renovating our existing recreational facilities.

Question #12: Minimum Wage

The D.C. minimum wage is currently \$6.15 an hour, which does not provide most minimum wage workers with a sufficient income to support a family

living in the District. What level do you propose for a D.C. minimum wage and why?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): I recently co-introduced the Minimum Wage Amendment Act of 2004, which will raise the minimum wage to \$6.60 an hour on January 1, 2005, and then to \$7.00 an hour the following year. This legislation will put more money in the pockets of workers, and I am very excited to continue to work for passage of this important legislation. I believe that eventually we need to consider additional increases to the minimum wage or reform of the District's income tax system in order to allow workers to make a living wage that will support their families and allow them to find housing in the District.

Question #13: Unemployment Compensation

Currently, the average amount of unemployment compensation that D.C. workers receive is \$241 per week. In addition, payments end after 26 weeks regardless of whether the worker has found a new job. What do you believe is an appropriate level for unemployment benefits, both as to payments and as to the length of eligibility?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): I strongly believe that the average amount received should be raised and the length of eligibility expanded. We need to ensure that people who are unemployed by no fault of their own, receive enough money to see them through the hardship period.

Question #14: Primary Health Care

All D.C. residents with incomes below 200% of poverty are eligible for public health care benefits through Medicaid or through the Alliance. However, many residents still face obstacles in obtaining the health care coverage for which they are eligible because they do not receive health plan information or understand how to apply for benefits. Also, it is very hard for people who receive Medicaid to recertify their benefits, which results in many of them losing coverage for a period of time. Some people do not understand that they may continue to be eligible for Medicaid when their earnings increase or they lose TANF. How will you ensure that all D.C. residents access their public health benefits and obtain preventive and primary health care?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): In order to inform people about the many benefits that are available in the District we need to continue to improve our education and outreach efforts. I recently supported funding for Medical Homes, which will improve our already strong network of primary care in the District of Columbia. One initiative that I have pushed for the last several years is to actually have eligibility/enrollment workers placed in our hospitals and clinics so that people coming into the health care system can be immediately enrolled in the appropriate program and have someone assisting them to fill out applications.

Question #15: Substance Abuse Treatment

Substance abuse affects 1 in 9 District residents, including a high percentage of teenagers and people with families. What would you do to increase the number of slots in prevention and intervention programs?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): Increasing funding for substance abuse treatment has been one of my priorities on Council, particularly substance abuse treatment for our youth. Statistics indicate that for every dollar we spend on substance abuse treatment we save at least seven dollars in the long run on criminal justice, health care, and lost worker productivity. For the upcoming 2005 fiscal year, I increased APRA's budget by \$750,000 and reserved \$3.5 million to fund 400 youth treatment slots, of which 200-outpatient treatment slots will be set aside as priority slots for youth in the care of the YSA.

Question #16: People with Disabilities

What programs would you support or propose to ensure that all D.C. residents with disabilities have access to support services, health care, and housing?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): I have been a strong supporter of funding for programs that improve the quality of life and independence for disabled District residents. The Interim Disability Assistance Amendment Act of 2000; provides temporary financial assistance to adults with disabilities while their application for Supplemental Security Income is pending. I have actively worked with the Department of Health to increase the number of community residential facilities and home care services for the disabled. I also plan to work with DOH to implement the Medicaid Buy-In Program, which will allow disabled District residents to work, without having to fear losing their Medicaid coverage.

Question #17: Secondhand Smoke

Legislation is pending in the D.C. Council that would ban smoking in workplaces -- including offices, restaurants, and bars -- to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke. What is your position on this legislation and why?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): I cannot support the Smoke Free Workplaces Act of 2003 because of the potentially negative impact on DC bars and restaurants. I must be mindful of the many Ward 8 residents who are employed in the hotel, bar, and restaurant industry who could lose their jobs. If the District were to impose this law, restaurant and bar patrons may simply choose to go to PG County or Virginia, which still allow smoking. I co-sponsored legislation entitled, the Smoke Free Workplaces Incentive Amendment Act of 2003, which provides a tax incentive but does not require business to be smoke free.

Question #18: Open Government

Public participation in the civic process requires that meetings and other government actions are open to the public with adequate advance notice. It also requires that clear and accurate information about the budget and other government decisions are readily available. What policies would you support to make the workings of government more open and inclusive?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): I believe that open, democratic government is the cornerstone of this nation and that the purpose of government is to serve the needs of the public. I would consider support of specific measures that make our government more transparent to our residents. As a matter of fact, District residents are a critical part of the decision-making process of the present Council. Our rules and procedures provide for the consideration of public views at every step of the legislative process. Residents can voice their opinions at public hearings and roundtables, by mail or fax, by e-mail or telephone, or in person.

Question #19: Tax Parity Act

Income tax cuts under the Tax Parity Act, which were suspended in 2002, are scheduled to take effect again in 2005. These tax cuts will cost the District \$141 million per year, mostly to benefit D.C.'s higher-income residents. What are your views on whether these income tax reductions should take effect?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): In general, I have not been in favor of a tax reduction for the District's higher income residents. Some combination of increases and reductions that would better balance this burden and is the least intrusive on most taxpayers is favorable. A reduction for working people and a combination of increases that spread the tax burden between business and the other taxpayers is the most desirable mix. Therefore, a mix of fees, eliminating the tax exemption for non-DC state and municipal bonds and other temporary measures including the rollback of the recordation taxes is most acceptable to me.

Question #20: Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund

In 1999, the District of Columbia created a Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to manage its share of funds received under a national settlement with the tobacco industry. D.C.'s fund now totals roughly \$60 million per year. Under the tobacco trust fund legislation, half of all funds received must be saved for future needs. The remaining half can be used for new or expanded services, including health, education, and social services. How would you propose to use the available funds?

Candidate Answers:

Allen (D): The Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund dollars have been used by the Mayor to fund health and human services programs, such as expansions to the Medicaid program. While I find funding these needs to be an important priority for the city, I would also like to see a larger percentage of these Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund dollars to go towards funding new tobacco cessation and prevention programs and I will continue to urge the Mayor and the Department of Health to develop such programs.

DELEGATE TO THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RACE

Candidates for this office:

(Candidates whose names are in a lighter typeface did not submit a response.)

- ✓ Eleanor Holmes Norton (Democrat)
- ✓ **Michael Monroe (Republican)**

Question #1: Affordable Housing

The District has lost a great deal of affordable housing in recent years. Reasons include private economic development, HOPE VI conversions, the loss of Project-based Section 8 properties through termination, repayment and opt-outs, and private landlords choosing not to take housing vouchers. How do you think D.C. can build and preserve affordable housing and maintain culturally and economically diverse neighborhoods?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): I will draft and introduce legislation to create even larger tax benefits to first time home buyers, and implement with local officials a city-wide beautification program to attract new residents to our culturally and economically diverse neighborhoods. I will help small businesses with tax breaks in order to promote and drive neighborhood revenue, thus creating jobs, and ultimately putting more money in your pocket, so you can buy the house that you want.

Question #2: Rent Control

The District's rent control law is up for renewal in 2005. Would you support reauthorization of the law and what changes, if any, would you propose to it?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): I will work with Members of Congress to bring attention to our economic and housing issues. We will hold landlords accountable and make sure that our tenants are being treated fairly.

Question #3: Homelessness

Homelessness in the District has increased 17% since 2001. Now, roughly 8,253 men, women, and children are homeless on any given day. How would you improve how the city provides shelter, housing and services to people who are homeless?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): We will dramatically reduce the homelessness problem by preventing future homeless cases from occurring through my opportunity awareness program which will be made available to the entire city. Let's prevent homelessness by connecting people with society and giving them opportunities before they are on the street.

Question #4: NIMBY (Not in My Backyard)

Especially as more economic development takes place in the city, it becomes harder to find sites for homeless shelters, group homes, and even affordable housing. How would you make sure that these services can be offered in a community-based setting? Please address the problem of resident resistance to such facilities being opened in their neighborhoods.

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): This is more of a local issue, but I will work with Members of Congress to focus attention on our city and the various problems that we face.

Question #5: Support for Immigrants

Close to 13% of the District's residents are immigrants. How would you improve services for immigrants living in D.C., especially with regard to jobs, housing, and language access?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): Immigrants who come to DC and want to work, want to contribute to society, and want to give, will be given opportunities to succeed and will have job placement programs established to help them find work. People who want to work and improve their future will find jobs in the District. We want to be proactive.

Question #6: Prisoner Reentry

Every year, more than 2,500 men and women return to D.C. from jails and prisons. What strategies would you pursue to help these residents reintegrate into their community? Please address access to jobs, housing, and treatment programs.

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): More important than prisoner reentry is preventing prisoner exit from society and into jail. We need to help make opportunities available to all of our citizens to prevent them from making mistakes that lead to arrests. The reentry strategy would not be such an issue if we could keep people from going to jail in the first place. Let's cut down on our crime. Let's make more improvements in our neighborhoods. Let's use our talents to benefit our city.

Question #7: Juvenile Justice

The D.C. Council recently approved the closing of Oak Hill, the controversial juvenile detention facility in Laurel, Maryland. What system of juvenile detention do you propose to replace Oak Hill? Please include how you would address any community opposition to smaller, neighborhood-based group homes.

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): The issue of juvenile detention originates in the home. Where are the parents? Every single child must have the proper guidance and support to make the right decisions in life. Every single child must have the opportunity for advancement by having a quality education. We must not fail our children so they will not be suspect to fail.

Question #8: Affordable Child Care

The District government has only enough funding to cover 40% of the 31,500 children eligible for subsidized child care and related services in FY 2005. As a result, many low-income working families cannot find affordable child care. What would you do to ensure that child care is available to all families?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): Working with members of Congress, I will bring the best health care the country has to offer to DC. I will not let the rest of the country move forward without us. I will seek to make sure that all children and all Washingtonians have the opportunity to find affordable health care.

Question #9: Public Schools

Recognizing that there are many city agencies providing services to the District's children, what steps would you take in your oversight and policy role to promote collaboration to enhance school outcomes? Please

include your ideas for ensuring that the Superintendent, the Board of Education, the City Council, and the Mayor all work as a team to raise academic achievement.

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): Teachers are too often being forced to babysit rather than educate. If I'm elected, every child will have the opportunity to receive a first rate education in our nations capital. I support strengthening our schools and providing families the opportunity to send their children to a private school through the voucher program if the child is academically qualified. Kids need to see good role models in their parents. Accountability starts at home and when teachers can teach, students can learn.

Question #10: Foster Care Transition

Young people raised in foster care often are not prepared to be on their own at age 21, when they must leave the foster care system. What programs would you support to help foster care youth aged 18-21 make the transition from foster care to independent adulthood?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): I will work to make every opportunity available to these 18-21 year olds. Everyone who wants to work in the District will have the opportunity if I'm elected.

Question #11: Youth Recreation/Jobs

Young people between the ages of 14 - 21 report there are not enough recreational and job opportunities for them in D.C., especially during the summer. What would you do to increase recreational, job training and job opportunities for youth?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): I will work with city leaders and use my various marketing and networking contacts to establish the largest youth career fair in the country. Every single person between 14-21 that wants to work will find a job. People have to want to work and those who want to succeed will do so.

Question #12: Minimum Wage

The D.C. minimum wage is currently \$6.15 an hour, which does not provide most minimum wage workers with a sufficient income to support a family

living in the District. What level do you propose for a D.C. minimum wage and why?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): I would like minimum wage to be competitive with other leading metropolitan cities in the United States.

Question #13: Unemployment Compensation

Currently, the average amount of unemployment compensation that D.C. workers receive is \$241 per week. In addition, payments end after 26 weeks regardless of whether the worker has found a new job. What do you believe is an appropriate level for unemployment benefits, both as to payments and as to the length of eligibility?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): I believe the current system of unemployment can be improved, but I also believe that the system needs to be aware of the corruption involved with the program. People quit their jobs, claim unemployment, find new jobs, and continue to receive unemployment. We need to thoroughly examine this program and then develop the proper decisions for improvement.

Question #14: Primary Health Care

All D.C. residents with incomes below 200% of poverty are eligible for public health care benefits through Medicaid or through the Alliance. However, many residents still face obstacles in obtaining the health care coverage for which they are eligible because they do not receive health plan information or understand how to apply for benefits. Also, it is very hard for people who receive Medicaid to recertify their benefits, which results in many of them losing coverage for a period of time. Some people do not understand that they may continue to be eligible for Medicaid when their earnings increase or they lose TANF. How will you ensure that all D.C. residents access their public health benefits and obtain preventive and primary health care?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): If elected, I will make sure that all DC residents have access to awareness programs regarding their health care opportunities. Regardless of income status, every single DC resident will understand what is involved with their health care options.

Question #15: Substance Abuse Treatment

Substance abuse affects 1 in 9 District residents, including a high percentage of teenagers and people with families. What would you do to increase the number of slots in prevention and intervention programs?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): Sometime the substance abuse can be passed on through genes, but in other cases it is the result of social conditioning. It is very important for individuals to be accountable for their actions and to work to promote opportunities to divert boredom or depression which can sometimes lead to substance abuse. Let's prevent the mistakes from happening, so we don't have to bandage it up.

Question #16: People with Disabilities

What programs would you support or propose to ensure that all D.C. residents with disabilities have access to support services, health care, and housing?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): Every single resident of the District should be aware of all opportunities available. I will make sure that opportunity is not just a word for our cities residents.

Question #17: Secondhand Smoke

Legislation is pending in the D.C. Council that would ban smoking in workplaces -- including offices, restaurants, and bars -- to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke. What is your position on this legislation and why?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): Leave the secondhand smoke up to the restaurant, offices, and bars. Let the business owner make the decision.

Question #18: Open Government

Public participation in the civic process requires that meetings and other government actions are open to the public with adequate advance notice. It also requires that clear and accurate information about the budget and

other government decisions are readily available. What policies would you support to make the workings of government more open and inclusive?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): When a monopoly exists in business, antitrust laws are in place to break it up and keep it honest. In government, there are no antitrust laws and when we don't have competition there is the potential for corruption. When there is no opponent, there is no choice. Without a choice and without a challenge, there is no democracy. I believe in a government for the people, of the people, and by the people.

Question #19: Tax Parity Act

Income tax cuts under the Tax Parity Act, which were suspended in 2002, are scheduled to take effect again in 2005. These tax cuts will cost the District \$141 million per year, mostly to benefit D.C.'s higher-income residents. What are your views on whether these income tax reductions should take effect?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): I think we ought to be excited about tax cuts because they will help the economy. The more money in our pockets, means more money we can invest or spend in our local economy, and as businesses get started and continue to grow, we'll start to see more jobs.

Question #20: Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund

In 1999, the District of Columbia created a Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to manage its share of funds received under a national settlement with the tobacco industry. D.C.'s fund now totals roughly \$60 million per year. Under the tobacco trust fund legislation, half of all funds received must be saved for future needs. The remaining half can be used for new or expanded services, including health, education, and social services. How would you propose to use the available funds?

Candidate Answers:

Monroe (R): If elected, I will seek to use these funds to invest in education and public safety, and issue remaining checks to DC residents. More money in your pockets means more money in the economy.

U.S. (SHADOW) REPRESENTATIVE RACE

Candidates for this office:

(Candidates whose names are in a lighter typeface did not submit a response.)

- ✓ Susana Baranano (Democrat)
- ✓ **Ray Browne (Democrat)**
- ✓ **Adam Eidinger (Statehood-Green)**

Question #1: Affordable Housing

The District has lost a great deal of affordable housing in recent years. Reasons include private economic development, HOPE VI conversions, the loss of Project-based Section 8 properties through termination, repayment and opt-outs, and private landlords choosing not to take housing vouchers. How do you think D.C. can build and preserve affordable housing and maintain culturally and economically diverse neighborhoods?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): Affordable housing is one of the three most pressing issues the city faces, along with public education and public safety. This falls outside my jurisdiction. However, capping tax rates for long term residents so they are not driven out of their homes by increasing property values causing higher taxes would certainly help. If we simply become an urban Disneyland and lose our soul in the process we have gained nothing.

Eidinger (S-G): While Mayor Williams has been out promoting his city living, DC style plan to bring 100,000 people into DC, thousands of low and moderate income people have been forced out of the District because of escalating housing costs. To ensure that DC's neighborhoods remain culturally and economically diverse, I support reserving 30% of each new apartment complex built in DC for low to moderate income people.

Question #2: Rent Control

The District's rent control law is up for renewal in 2005. Would you support reauthorization of the law and what changes, if any, would you propose to it?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): I have supported rent control throughout my public service.

Eidinger (S-G): I support the existing rent control legislation. I do not support changes to the rent control legislation at this time.

Question #3: Homelessness

Homelessness in the District has increased 17% since 2001. Now, roughly 8,253 men, women, and children are homeless on any given day. How would you improve how the city provides shelter, housing and services to people who are homeless?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): I opposed the repeal of Proposition 17 in 1990 (the law which required the city to provide shelter for anyone who needed it) and would support such a law again.

Eidinger (S-G): Homelessness is a major problem in DC and it is a problem that I have worked on for many years. I supported the Olive Branch Community in their attempts to showcase how Mayor Williams' policies have harmed the homeless community. While Mayor Williams recently introduced a plan to rid the District of homelessness by 2014, his history of closing shelters demonstrates his lack of support for the homeless. I support comprehensive programs located at shelters that are open 24 hours a day that help homeless people transition into fully employed and self sufficient individuals.

Question #4: NIMBY (Not in My Backyard)

Especially as more economic development takes place in the city, it becomes harder to find sites for homeless shelters, group homes, and even affordable housing. How would you make sure that these services can be offered in a community-based setting? Please address the problem of resident resistance to such facilities being opened in their neighborhoods.

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): My record as Vice Chair of the Hurt Home in Georgetown speaks for itself. This model facility for emotionally disadvantaged children was bitterly opposed by the residents. As a local ANC Commissioner, I fought for these children through two lawsuits until we had firmly established the presence of the Hurt Home in Georgetown where today it is warmly embraced.

Eidinger (S-G): Homeless shelters, group homes and affordable housing should be located in every ward across the District; however, city government officials have a responsibility to work with neighborhood residents and address their concerns.

Question #5: Support for Immigrants

Close to 13% of the District’s residents are immigrants. How would you improve services for immigrants living in D.C., especially with regard to jobs, housing, and language access?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): I was the first elected official in the city to support voting in local elections for non-citizen residents. There is now a bill before the Council to make that law.

Eidinger (S-G): I believe that all government agencies should have multilingual services to help immigrants with any concerns or issues. Additionally, I believe in providing English as a Second Language classes to anyone who wishes to attend them.

Question #6: Prisoner Reentry

Every year, more than 2,500 men and women return to D.C. from jails and prisons. What strategies would you pursue to help these residents reintegrate into their community? Please address access to jobs, housing, and treatment programs.

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): In testimony before the Board of Elections and Ethics I supported returning the vote to prisoners, including those convicted of felonies, who had paid their dues to society.

Eidinger (S-G): I believe that the goal of prison should be rehabilitation not just retribution. This is in the best interest of society since prison should never mark a person for life. The government should actively work with these former prisoners and should help them get access to jobs, housing and treatment programs.

Question #7: Juvenile Justice

The D.C. Council recently approved the closing of Oak Hill, the controversial juvenile detention facility in Laurel, Maryland. What system of juvenile detention do you propose to replace Oak Hill? Please include how you would address any community opposition to smaller, neighborhood-based group homes.

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): N/A

Eidinger (S-G): Juveniles, particularly those who have committed nonviolent crimes, deserve treatment and supervision. One of the major problems with our smaller neighborhood based group homes is the lack of accountability and supervision. Until the issues with these group homes are resolved it is perfectly reasonable for communities to be opposed to these facilities. These facilities should be fully staffed with properly trained professionals that can provide both the treatment and the supervision the juvenile offenders deserve and the neighborhood needs.

Question #8: Affordable Child Care

The District government has only enough funding to cover 40% of the 31,500 children eligible for subsidized child care and related services in FY 2005. As a result, many low-income working families cannot find affordable child care. What would you do to ensure that child care is available to all families?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): N/A

Eidinger (S-G): Without full funding this problem cannot be addressed. If DC had budget autonomy and Congress ceased interfering with our local budget priorities, then it would be more likely that we could ensure that child care is available to all families. Many families don't know that these services exist; if they knew about them, we could increase community pressure and have these services fully funded.

Question #9: Public Schools

Recognizing that there are many city agencies providing services to the District's children, what steps would you take in your oversight and policy role to promote collaboration to enhance school outcomes? Please include your ideas for ensuring that the Superintendent, the Board of Education, the City Council, and the Mayor all work as a team to raise academic achievement.

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): I support a fully elected school board and school-based management.

Eidinger (S-G): I intend to send my newborn daughter to DC public schools; therefore, I support quality education. I opposed the federal voucher program that Mayor Williams supported. I opposed the Mayor's attempt to make the Board of Education an appointed body. Until the Mayor realizes that he should not go to the federal government to have his educational plans met, I think the various city agencies should challenge the Mayor to support the District's children. I believe that public schools should be fully funded and fully staffed. I support giving the Board of Education budget authority.

Question #10: Foster Care Transition

Young people raised in foster care often are not prepared to be on their own at age 21, when they must leave the foster care system. What programs would you support to help foster care youth aged 18-21 make the transition from foster care to independent adulthood?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): N/A

Eidinger (S-G): I support Child & Family Services Agency's Independent Living Program for foster care youth. This program teaches essential life skills. Additionally, I believe that a foster care youth that is enrolled in an education/vocation program should be allowed to remain in the system until he or she graduates.

Question #11: Youth Recreation/Jobs

Young people between the ages of 14 - 21 report there are not enough recreational and job opportunities for them in D.C., especially during the summer. What would you do to increase recreational, job training and job opportunities for youth?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): N/A

Eidinger (S-G): I support full funding for the summer jobs program.

Question #12: Minimum Wage

The D.C. minimum wage is currently \$6.15 an hour, which does not provide most minimum wage workers with a sufficient income to support a family living in the District. What level do you propose for a D.C. minimum wage and why?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): The minimum wage should be increased to at least \$7. More importantly, we should have living wage legislation.

Eidinger (S-G): I support increasing the minimum wage in DC to \$15 an hour, which is considered to be a living wage. I have instituted a \$15 wage for contract laborers at my small business because I strongly believe in paying people enough to pay for basic needs like housing, health care and food. Some might say that \$15 an hour is too much, but District residents would have increased spending power creating economic benefits, spurring growth and consumer demand. Considering the cost of living in Washington, DC, \$15 is a reasonable base salary for a full time worker.

Question #13: Unemployment Compensation

Currently, the average amount of unemployment compensation that D.C. workers receive is \$241 per week. In addition, payments end after 26 weeks regardless of whether the worker has found a new job. What do you believe is an appropriate level for unemployment benefits, both as to payments and as to the length of eligibility?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): N/A

Eidinger (S-G): In this economy, even skilled workers are having trouble finding adequate employment. Unemployed individuals should not have their benefits cut off after 26 weeks if they are actively searching for a new job. Instead, individuals should be allowed to receive unemployment benefits as long as they are sending out resumes or applications and interviewing for new positions. Payments should be equivalent to the income the unemployed person was receiving before losing his or her job up until a \$40,000 per year cap.

Question #14: Primary Health Care

All D.C. residents with incomes below 200% of poverty are eligible for public health care benefits through Medicaid or through the Alliance. However, many residents still face obstacles in obtaining the health care coverage for which they are eligible because they do not receive health plan information or understand how to apply for benefits. Also, it is very hard for people who receive Medicaid to recertify their benefits, which results in many of them losing coverage for a period of time. Some people do not understand that they may continue to be eligible for Medicaid when their earnings increase or they lose TANF. How will you ensure that all

D.C. residents access their public health benefits and obtain preventive and primary health care?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): N/A

Eidinger (S-G): I believe in universal health care and I am a recipient of the DC Health Care Alliance. I believe that every District resident should receive a mailing twice a year about the DC Health Care Alliance, explaining whether they are eligible to participate at the current time. I also support reopening DC General Hospital and I would prefer that it would be publicly managed.

Question #15: Substance Abuse Treatment

Substance abuse affects 1 in 9 District residents, including a high percentage of teenagers and people with families. What would you do to increase the number of slots in prevention and intervention programs?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): I served on both the Mayor's Commission on Alcoholism and the Drug Strategy Team. I have fought for twenty years for treatment as opposed to jail for substance abusers. I fought for more beds at Karrick Hall. I will continue to be part of this effort.

Eidinger (S-G): Philosophically, I believe that legalizing all drugs and taxing them will provide sufficient revenue to ensure that prevention and intervention programs are available to all people. In the meantime, I believe that we need to stop incarcerating first time drug offenders in the District of Columbia. Studies show that treatment instead of incarceration saves money. The more money saved, the more prevention and intervention programs could be funded.

Question #16: People with Disabilities

What programs would you support or propose to ensure that all D.C. residents with disabilities have access to support services, health care, and housing?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): N/A

Eidinger (S-G): Again, I believe in universal health care. I also believe that people with disabilities are entitled to the same access to services and housing

opportunities as all other District residents. I am opposed to any discrimination in services, health care and housing. I believe in incentives for developers to create more ADA accessible rental housing.

Question #17: Secondhand Smoke

Legislation is pending in the D.C. Council that would ban smoking in workplaces -- including offices, restaurants, and bars -- to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke. What is your position on this legislation and why?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): N/A

Eidinger (S-G): I am undecided on the smoking ban issue at this time.

Question #18: Open Government

Public participation in the civic process requires that meetings and other government actions are open to the public with adequate advance notice. It also requires that clear and accurate information about the budget and other government decisions are readily available. What policies would you support to make the workings of government more open and inclusive?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): I have always supported open government and made the records of our office available to the public and media.

Eidinger (S-G): I am a strong supporter of open government. I think that all public hearings, including those at administrative agencies like the Board of Elections and Ethics, should be broadcast on the various District government cable channels. Furthermore, I believe that the www.dc.gov website needs to be easier to navigate.

Question #19: Tax Parity Act

Income tax cuts under the Tax Parity Act, which were suspended in 2002, are scheduled to take effect again in 2005. These tax cuts will cost the District \$141 million per year, mostly to benefit D.C.'s higher-income residents. What are your views on whether these income tax reductions should take effect?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): N/A

Eidinger (S-G): I don't support tax cuts for the wealthy under the Tax Parity Act. I support increasing the District's tax base through a commuter tax and through payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs) for large scale non-profit organizations like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, Fannie Mae, and others. If these non-profit organizations paid their fair share, then District residents would not be as burdened by excessively high tax rates.

Question #20: Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund

In 1999, the District of Columbia created a Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to manage its share of funds received under a national settlement with the tobacco industry. D.C.'s fund now totals roughly \$60 million per year. Under the tobacco trust fund legislation, half of all funds received must be saved for future needs. The remaining half can be used for new or expanded services, including health, education, and social services. How would you propose to use the available funds?

Candidate Answers:

Browne (D): N/A

Eidinger (S-G): I support utilizing the Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to establish universal health care in DC.