

**Caribbean-American Political Action Committee (C-PAC)
District of Columbia – 2018 Candidate Questionnaire**

Please return the completed form via email to cpac.dmv@gmail.com by Friday, April 13, 2018. Responses will be shared with C-PAC's membership.

Office Sought: Council At-Large

Candidate's Name: David Schwartzman

Current Occupation: Professor Emeritus

Party: DC Statehood Green

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1. Please explain your plan or approach to improve agency responsiveness and the quality of the District's constituent services.

We need better oversight of agency performance, more transparency from the Executive branch of government. For example, I heard Jennifer Budoff, Council Office of the Budget Director say yesterday (April 11, 2018 in a presentation to DC for Democracy) that because of Mayorial control of schools, data on education is very hard to get. The needs of our residents must be the priority, not economic development which benefits the most wealthy. If elected my office in the Wilson Building will be a resource center for organizing, inviting leading organizations fighting for a more just DC to make use of this center.

2. What specific actions have you initiated or will you take to support the Caribbean-American community in Washington, D.C.?

My advocacy over the years has been focused on poverty elimination, quality education, affordable housing for moderate and low-income residents, progressive taxes tapping into the more than adequate tax base and eliminating the institutional racism which still is the reality guiding our local elected government (e.g., the level of child poverty mainly affecting Black and Brown children is shockingly high in DC, only slightly lower than Mississippi). These issues obviously impact the Caribbean-American community in DC. As a Councilmember I will work to prioritize these challenges with appropriate legislation and especially adequate budgeting. For example, as a member of the Fair Budget Coalition, I collaborated in generating the strong recommendations for the FY 2019 Budget (<http://fairbudget.org/>). The total increase in funding over FY 2018 is \$467 million, while the Mayor's Budget for FY 2019 provides for a \$150 million increase, far short of what is necessary for a truly just budget.

3. Unfortunately, throughout the City many Caribbean-owned businesses closed in recent years. How will you support the viability and competitiveness of the City's small, minority, veteran, women,

and especially Caribbean-owned businesses?

Small and minority businesses are the job creators in our economy, so I support efforts to start new businesses and build our existing network of business. They are facing increasing pressures on multiple fronts, so as a Councilmember, I would take the following actions to support them:

- Gentrification/rising rents: businesses throughout the City facing rapidly rising rents and gentrification pressures from chain stores, so I would support legislation to cap the rate of rent increases for commercial space serving small businesses. There is already some support at the DC Council for taking this type of action, so I would meet with small business owners to help create legislation that would protect them from price gouging by landlords who own buildings in gentrifying areas. In addition, I would support stronger measures to set aside commercial space in developments subsidized by DC government for small and minority businesses, including reduced rents for new tenants, and I will work to improve the policies for these commercial space set-asides to ensure that small and minority businesses can take advantage of them.
- Support for small and minority businesses: I support strengthening technical assistance and financing for small and minority businesses through the existing network of Small Business Resource Centers. City funding for these programs has remained relatively flat over the last few years, even as the need for support is growing. I support both increased funding and improved measures of the outcomes for small businesses served under these programs, so the City and small businesses are gaining the most from our investments. I acknowledge the leadership provided by the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development for these Resource Centers and the carefully considered policy recommended: <https://www.cnhed.org/policy-advocacy/smallbusiness/> and encourage small and minority business owners to access the resources provided through <http://dcsmallbizhelp.cnhed.org>
- Incubator space for startup businesses: I support City and private investments in incubator space serving various types of startup, small, and minority businesses, from food service businesses and local farmers to technology firms, consulting firms, and others. These spaces provide inexpensive space and support services for new entrepreneurs starting and growing their businesses. Incubators work in a variety of neighborhoods throughout the city and play an important in assisting new businesses.
- Increased financing for small businesses: I support the establishment of a public bank owned by DC government and providing loans for small businesses, affordable housing, and environmentally sustainable projects (including those benefitting small businesses). The City's Department of Insurance, Securities, and Banking is currently conducting a feasibility to determine the specific types of lending programs that could best support small businesses. One idea currently being discussed at the DC Department of Local, Small Business Development and the Calvert Foundation is for an entity as the public bank to support the existing network of small business lenders by buying their seasoned loans, the same as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac provide for home mortgages. These would provide new loan capital for these financial institutions to lend to small businesses.

4. What policy actions would you propose or support to improve the opportunities and rights of Caribbean immigrants in the District of Columbia?

Holding our DC government accountable to its commitments made upon becoming the first Human Rights City in the nation in December 2008 applies to all our residents, especially those who have not been fully recognized as deserving the same opportunities and rights as everyone else. Specifically this means that all human rights must be respected, economic, social and environmental, for all residents.

Proactive action must be taken by DC governments, on the legislative and budgetary fronts.

5. The City's Caribbean Community is the only immigrant community without an Office to address and support community affairs and services. Would you support the creation of such an office?

Yes, of course.

6. How do you plan to help strengthen the Certified Business Enterprise (CBE) program since larger business take advantage of many small businesses, including Caribbean-owned ones, with whom they partner under this program?

I would propose strengthening the small and minority contracting provisions through two measures. First, I would introduce legislation requiring City contracting officials to enforce existing rules for real estate development and other contracting opportunities from the City. For far too long, the City has turned a blind eye toward prime contractors receiving City funds who agree in writing to use CBEs for a portion of their work and then fail to comply. The City must step up its enforcement efforts and require the return of public funds from contractors who fail to meet their obligations under existing law. Clawback must be implemented. Second, I would propose tightening CBE regulations to prevent sham businesses from pretending to be CBEs and operating as fronts for larger businesses, passing along CBE benefits to their large company backers. This has been widely reported, but DC government and DC Council have failed to take action. I will lead efforts to close these loopholes and improve the prospects for CBEs.

7. What policies will you support to address the challenges facing DREAMers, the administration's suspension of temporary protective status for many D.C. residents, and the threats facing sanctuary cities?

DC government must make our Sanctuary City status as strong as possible, no cooperation by our DC government with policies which violate immigrants' rights! For example, District owned facilities should be made available to undocumented immigrants. If civil disobedience is required, I will participate as a Councilmember.

8. What concrete steps will you take to improve the District of Columbia's Public School system – including facilities and equipment, teacher treatment, relationships with parents, as well as education standards and test scores in all wards of the City?

I taught as a college faculty member for over 40 years. I know that motivating students to learn requires lessons that are relevant to their lives, with teaching critical thinking an essential component of their educational experience. No more teaching to the test! I stand behind the Washington Teacher's Union under the outstanding leadership of Elizabeth Davis, in their efforts to improve the quality of education in our public school system. Eliminating child poverty would have profound positive impacts school performance and the quality of life for both students and their families as demonstrated by leading educational scholars such as Diane Ravitch. Privatization of public education has been a failure. "Ravitch, NPE president and co-founder, told the conference that reformers' first goal "is to stop privatization because privatization will end public education. Public education is in a fight for survival. Our mission is to awaken every citizen to the threat to take away what belongs to all of us." (Source: <https://capitalandmain.com/diane-ravitch-public-education-is-in-a-fight-for-survival>). Imperative goals include: neighborhood schools within walking distance from student homes, smaller class sizes, especially for elementary education, classes in art, music, social studies, the sciences and vocational education with provision for apprenticeship programs in high school leading to quality jobs upon graduation, wrap-around services to meet students' social, emotional and health needs.

9. In Washington, D.C., many seniors seek to age in their homes and/or communities. What efforts will you take to improve access of services and the quality of programs for the City's senior citizens?

There are already several provisions in DC law designed to help seniors to stay in their homes, namely the homestead deduction for seniors, the Elderly Tenant and Tenant with a Disability Protection Law, and Schedule H in the DC income tax schedule. But outreach by the DC Office on Aging and the Office of Tenant Advocacy (OTA) must be increased to make possible the full implementation of these laws. The OTA must be adequately funded so that sufficient staff will be available to make sure seniors can take advantage of these programs and other services for seniors.

10. What issues are you most concerned about in your run for political office?

My Platform

**If you want an alternative to trickle -down economics and housing, consider this!
I will champion these critical steps for a better quality of life for *all DC residents*:**

Curb public deals/subsidies from DC's revenue going to gentrification and displacement of long-term residents. Strengthen the Comprehensive Plan for residents, block the developers' efforts to weaken it! No Amazon Deal!

Recover the big federal income tax cut for wealthy DC residents as revenue for DC by hiking the DC income tax rates for the same taxpayers, leaving them paying the same overall taxes (federal plus DC), thereby generating at least \$250 million more in 2019, to fund affordable housing for low-income residents, the homeless, financing community land trusts, repairing public housing, and boost rental assistance, income support for low-income residents (increase TANF and tax rebates). For more details go to <https://www.dcctj.org/>.

Support Save Our System Coalition (WMATA), for progressive dedicated funding, lower fares and better service, worker rights, against privatization of the Metro system.

Stronger action by our Mayor/Council to protect our residents, especially our children from exposure to lead in drinking water!

I support the goals of Black Lives Matter and Stop Police Terror Project DC, cut DC Police ties to Israel, I support the non-violent global BDS campaign, standing in solidarity with Palestinians for equal rights. Our Mayor and Council should too!

Save McMillan Park, Green sustainable development by open bid, void the Mayor's VMP bad deal! Support Paid Family Leave and Carbon Rebate for DC residents, stronger Labor Law Enforcement and Rent Control, Universal Child Care and Immigrant Rights! Justice for Returning Citizens! Divest from Wall Street, forward to a DC Public Bank and DC Public Power! No more rain tax (imperious area charge)! Traffic fines based on income instead of a regressive one-for-all charge (follow Finland's lead).

Resident in DC since 1976, live in Brightwood neighborhood, Ward 4
Professor Emeritus, Howard University
Chair, Political Policy and Action Committee, DC Statehood Green Party

Member of: ONE DC, Empower DC, the Fair Budget Coalition, Grassroots Planning Coalition, Green Neighbors, Metro DC Democratic Socialists of America, DC for Democracy
Steering Committee: DC Public Banking Center, DC Human Rights City Committee.

I am an ecosocialist and scientist focusing on climate change and energy.

For the many, not the few!

The DC Statehood Green Party is the only DC ballot-status party to not take corporate/developer contributions

Remember, at the general election everyone can cast two votes for Council At-Large.

The following is a selection from testimony I gave to the COW, DC Council, on March 20, 2018:

“Here are some relevant measures of the quality of life for DC residents:DC has the highest income inequality in the nation, compared to the 50 states. Income inequality is the driver of bad outcomes for all our residents, likewise for communities around the world. DC’s child poverty level is very high, only slightly lower than Mississippi. DC’s homelessness per capita level in 2016 was higher than any U.S. city (1). No surprise, affordable housing has virtually vanished for the majority of DC residents. In DC 39% of homes are occupied by their owners, the remaining residents rent (2).Only renters in three zip codes, (20016, 20015 and 20004) with the highest median income in DC, comprising 10% of DC’s renters, pay less than 30% of their income for housing, the upper limit to affordability according to HUD. In contrast, renters in zip code 20010 (Park View, Columbia Heights and Mt. Pleasant) pay 62% of their income for housing (3).

*This is the documented legacy of the heavyweight of the Federal City Council’s neoliberal, “balance the budget on the backs of the poor” agenda on our local elected government since the Control Board regime. This agenda of trickle-down economics and housing has failed miserably. The allies of the Federal City Council, the lobby of the big developers and bankers (4), include Greater Greater Washington, the Coalition for so-called “Smarter” Growth and the DC Policy Center. These groups greenwash gentrification and displacement of long term residents. Their claims to be promoting affordable housing and equity are belied by their support for OP’s pathetic weakening of the Comp Plan, which is designed to grease the wheels of finance capital, the 0.1% at the expense of the majority, especially Black and Brown residents (5). Trickle-down economics is a euphemism for the agenda of the Federal City Council, it is rather a geyser of profit to the top. This is institutional racism in practice, call it by its name, *white supremacy in service to the millionaire/billionaire class.*”*

Footnotes

(1) See documentation in the 2017 DC Human Rights City Report, at <https://www.afsc.org/document/2017-dc-human-rights-city-report>; I am on the SC of the DC Human Right City Committee and contributed to this report and the two previous ones.

(2) <http://www.businessinsider.com/homeownership-rate-state-map-2017-7>

Here's how many people own their homes in every state, Andy Kiersz, July 28, 2017

“The US Census Bureau recently released its quarterly estimates of homeownership and vacancy rates in the US and each of the 50 states and Washington, DC. Homeownership rates, or the percentage of homes occupied by their owners, ranged from 39.2% in the District of Columbia...”

(3) <http://blog.onradpad.com/dcrentonsalary/>; What D.C. Zip Codes are Paying the Most of Their Salaries in Rent? (2015 U.S. Census Data).

(4) For example, the Federal City Council’s Executive Committee includes VPs David Lawson (Managing Director of JP Morgan Private Bank), and Josh B. Bernstein (member, Washington Board of SunTrust Bank). Anthony Williams is the CEO, the architect of neoliberal economic policies starting with

his service as the CFO of the Control Board. For more information go to:

<http://www.federalcitycouncil.org/>.

(5) In their statement to the media by the United Nations' Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent upon the conclusion of their historic investigation in the U.S., January 2016, they conclude:

“..the Working Group was informed about the destruction of public housing on some cities; at the same time, public funding for new houses appears insufficient to meet the demands of new housing...the process of gentrification has a heavy impact on African Americans who are being displaced from city centers under the argument of the need for new investment and development. In particular, the Working Group was alarmed by incidents of eviction, demolition and conversion of Barry Farm public housing in Washington D.C.” Available at: <https://www.ushrnetwork.org/our-work/project/un-working-group-experts-people-african-descent-visit>.