

C-PAC QUESTIONS FOR MAYOR BOWSER

1. Are there any comprehensive immigration reform legislative or policy proposals which you support that would strengthen the opportunities and rights of Caribbean immigrants in the District of Columbia, absent any action by the Federal Government?

In November 2017, I launched our Immigrant Justice Legal Services program to mobilize pro bono legal services in order to provide immigration legal services - the first of its kind in Washington, DC. While similar programs exist in other parts of the nation, our program has a broader focus than most. Among other services, the IJLS program funds “know your rights” legal briefings, trainings and mentorship for pro bono attorneys, and legal assistance to help people navigate affirmative filings and asylum applications.

In addition to launching the IJLS Grant Program, I announced the New American Workforce Partnership, a partnership between DC Government and the non-profit group, National Immigration Forum, to make citizenship services more readily available for DC Government employees, their families, and hundreds of others who live or work in Washington, DC. The partnership will help thousands of District residents go through the naturalization process and become American citizens.

2. What will Washington DC do to protect its status as a sanctuary city?

Shortly after the last presidential election, I reinforced my fervent support of our sanctuary city status and continue to do so. The values, laws, and policies of Washington, DC did not change on Election Day. We celebrate our diversity and respect all DC residents no matter their immigration status. We are a sanctuary city because we know that our neighborhoods are safer and stronger when no one is afraid to call on our government for help, and when our police can focus on protecting and serving.

3. The District of Columbia is a more diverse city than it was in the past. What will be your policies to ensure that first responders i.e.—the police, mobile crisis team, EMS and fire fighters - are culturally competent to interact with this diverse population?

Washington DC is growing and more diverse than it has been in recent decades. We recently reached 700,000 residents in February, our highest population count since the late 1960s. As part of that growth we are welcoming residents from across the United States and around the globe. Ensuring cultural competency and language comprehension among District employees and residents is important, especially in times of emergency. The Metropolitan Police Department has a number of special liaison units to foster better relationships for specific communities across the city, and the current Chief of Police now has these offices reporting directly to him. Additionally, we’ve announced a training course developed through a Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) – University of the District of the Columbia Community College (UDC-CC) partnership at the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The first-of-its kind program provides all sworn and civilian members with an insight toward the African American experience in the District, as well as educates them on the history of the neighborhoods that MPD serves. Guided by UDC-CC professors, this program expands upon MPD’s training on implicit bias, cultural sensitivity, and the interaction between law enforcement and minority communities.

4. The Caribbean is a strong trading partner with the U.S., and there are opportunities to create economic benefits for both the District of Columbia and Caribbean residents. Will you support strengthening business, social and cultural relations and exchanges between D.C residents and the Caribbean, and if so how?

A priority increasingly leaning into its place as a global investment location and source of quality services and products. My administration has hosted a number of trade speaker series and fora, most recently with the Embassy of Haiti and the Embassy of the Bahamas. Though, my administration has led trade missions to promote our exports we haven’t yet travelled to the Caribbean.

5. How will you improve and maintain regular outreach and communication with your Caribbean constituents throughout your term?

My administration maintains open communication with all of the city's communities. I'm more than happy to continue and expand the conversation with the District's Caribbean community. I can always be reached directly at eom@dc.gov or on Twitter @MayorBowser.

6. Carnival, in one form or another, is a vivid and joyful expression of the cultural heritage of most of Caribbean countries. For twenty years carnival was celebrated in the District of Columbia in partnership with the D.C. Government. What are your views regarding the Caribbean Carnival and are you willing to work cooperatively with the Caribbean community for its return to D.C? And if you are, what specifically would you be prepared to do, as mayor, to return carnival to D.C.

Caribbean Carnival was one of the many fun and celebratory festivals that took place in the District, and would love to see it back in the city. I understand that it's a financial capacity issue on behalf of the organizers that it hasn't been here since 2012. I think this is one of the points of discussion we should continue so that we can find a solution and bring the Caribbean Carnival back to Washington, DC.

7. The Affordable Care Act is under attack by the Federal Government. What will your government do in light of this do to provide health care to DC's most vulnerable residents?

Even prior to the Affordable Care Act, DC residents had more health insurance coverage than most other states. Healthcare is a right – and if reelected as mayor I will continue to do everything in my power to protect our insurance programs.

8. Gun violence is becoming a concern for Americans, wherever they are. What is your government doing to minimize to prospects of gun violence in the District of Columbia?

Under my leadership, we have worked to make sure our crime scene evidence lab was reaccredited – so that we are able to quickly and accurately test crime scene evidence, including bullets, to bring to justice those who bring illegal guns into our neighborhoods. I recently introduced legislation that would outlaw bump stocks in Washington, DC; an added measure to gun control laws which are already some of the most restrictive in the country. We deal with the impact of guns in our city every day. We can come up with our laws in DC, but if our neighbors don't have strict gun laws, it affects us, too. The time is now. I believe very strongly on a federal level, Congress has to act and, if given the opportunity to serve as your mayor for the next four years, I will continue to use this office to push for greater gun control.

9. With the gentrification of the District of Columbia, many African Americans are being priced out of the city. What is your government doing to assist less well-off citizens to remain, or move, into the city?

DC's economy is thriving. Nearly 700,000 residents now call DC home and that number is still growing. But, much like urban cities across the country, far too many District residents have yet to share in the prosperity and economic growth that has occurred in the city. With an annual budget of more than \$13 billion dollars, I have pushed my team to leverage DC government programs to ensure all of our residents have a fair shot by making available resources they need to purchase a home, start a business, or support their families. This year, I released a toolkit for African American prosperity for the first time to include information on DC government funded programs that can help individuals, families, and business owners find their pathway to economic prosperity in Washington, DC.

In my first four years in office, my economic development and housing team has sparked the creation or preservation of more 10,400 affordable units, with another 2,950 in preconstruction. In Fiscal Year 2017, we made historic investments in affordable housing, getting more than \$138 million in Housing Production Trust Fund financing out the door to support 23 projects that will produce or preserve more than 1,900 affordable units.

My team's multi-pronged approach to housing production and preservation, homeownership, and development of vacant properties is winning national recognition. On September 11, the District was selected for the Urban Land Institute's Larson Housing Policy Leadership Award. This annual award, provided by ULI's Terwilliger Center for Housing, recognizes innovative ways the public sector is addressing the nation's affordable housing crisis.

10. What accomplishment, as Mayor of the District of Columbia, are you most proud of?

We have accomplished a lot, but there is still work to do. I'm proud of the fact that we have committed to the creation and preservation of affordable housing, launched the Infrastructure Academy which trains District residents for the construction industry, and lowered the risk of homelessness. And the District is a strong contender for Amazon HQ2 which is a testament to the city's global competitiveness for human capital, economic growth, and political stability.

With your support, I would be honored to continue serving as mayor of my hometown for another four years to continue the good work that we have started.