



# The Caribbean-American Political Action Committee

1015 18th Street, N.W., Suite 200, Washington, D.C., 20036 | 202-349-1498

[www.CaribbeanPac.org](http://www.CaribbeanPac.org)

## The Caribbean-American Political Action Committee (C-PAC) District of Columbia – 2026 Candidate Questionnaire

Please return the completed form via email to [cpac.dmv@gmail.com](mailto:cpac.dmv@gmail.com) by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, March 31, 2026. Responses will be shared with C-PAC's membership.

**Office Sought:** Ward 5 DC Council

**Candidate's Name:** Bernita Carmichael

**Current Occupation:** Full-time candidate and previously Enterprise Risk Manager for the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education

**Party:** Democrat

Campaign contact information (Address, Phone, Fax, Email, Website): Bernita Carmichael 2026

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1. If elected, how would you proactively and consistently engage with Caribbean-American constituents, groups, local leaders, and organizations in your constituency?

**Engaging with Caribbean-American constituents is a personal priority for me, as this community is home to me. My Mother lost both of her parents before turning 21 and her God Parents both Trinidadian made sure my mother continued to thrive. I regularly engage local businesses, like Teddy's Roti Shop, a tradition my mother and I share since I was a child. My mother waves her Trinidadian pride very high. At a recent candidate forum, I proposed hosting International Food Festivals to celebrate Ward 5's diversity and foster cultural exchange. As councilwoman, I will establish a brain trust group within my constituent services department, acting as a mini-commission on Caribbean-American affairs. This will empower the Caribbean-American community to voice their concerns and collaborate on addressing both local and broader issues effectively through our Ward 5 office.**

2. How would your office address barriers Caribbean immigrants face when accessing public services such as healthcare, safe, affordable housing, education or social programs that disproportionately affect them?



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I have had first hand experience with addressing Caribbean immigrants barriers in areas we don't often talk about. One specific area is "aging". Ms. Lucille taught me a lot as we worked with her and her family to find her a senior living home during COVID. She loves meat pies and every chance I could, I would drive to Laurel and take her caribbean foods her senior living place didn't provide. She was so grateful for a taste of home and she was a big deal in her day in New York serving as Chief of Staff for a major hospital. That's just to say, we must address aging for the Caribbean immigrant community too.

To address the barriers Caribbean immigrants face in accessing public services, my office will utilize a multi-faceted approach that includes legislation, outreach, grants, education, and workforce development. We will implement these strategies through the Caribbean-American mini-commission. Additionally, I will advocate for a global perspective in our initiatives, starting with the Caribbean-American community. My goal is to leverage global programs and enhance the Mayor's Summer Youth programs, ensuring they reflect the diverse needs and backgrounds of our residents. I believe we can create mutually beneficial pipelines right here at home, through a pilot program I've been mapping out specifically for the caribbean-american community.

3. How do you ensure culturally responsive services for Caribbean-American residents across agencies (e.g., health, education, law enforcement, etc.)?

To ensure culturally responsive services for Caribbean-American residents, I will implement a comprehensive strategy across all agencies. This includes providing cultural competency training for staff in health, education, law enforcement, and other services to better understand and meet the unique needs of the Caribbean-American community. Additionally, I will establish a mini-commission, including representatives from the Caribbean-American community, to provide input and guidance on policies and programs. Regular community engagement forums will be held to gather feedback and ensure that services are tailored to the cultural and linguistic needs of residents. By fostering collaboration among agencies and the community, we can enhance service delivery and improve the overall experience for Caribbean-American residents.



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4. What initiatives will you lead and/or support that benefit Caribbean-American small business owners and workers, particularly in industries where they are heavily represented?

I am committed to supporting Caribbean-American small business owners and workers through several key initiatives:

**1. Access to Capital and Resources:** I will advocate for grants and low-interest loans specifically targeted at Caribbean-American businesses to help them grow and thrive. Partnering with local financial institutions, we can create programs that educate and guide business owners on how to access these funds.

**2. Business Development and Training Programs:** I will support initiatives that provide training in business management, marketing, and digital literacy tailored to industries where Caribbean-Americans are heavily represented. This includes workshops and mentorship programs to equip entrepreneurs with the skills needed to succeed.

**3. Local Procurement Opportunities:** My degree is in procurement and public contracting. I will advocate for initiatives aimed at increasing the procurement of goods and services from Caribbean-American businesses by local government and larger organizations.

**4. Networking and Collaboration:** I will promote networking events and partnerships among Caribbean-American businesses to strengthen community ties and foster collaboration. This includes facilitating connections with industry leaders and potential customers.

**5. Cultural Promotions:** I will support initiatives that celebrate Caribbean culture through inner city festivals, markets, and events, spotlighting Caribbean-American businesses and helping them reach a broader audience.

By prioritizing these initiatives, we can create a more supportive environment for Caribbean-American small business owners and workers, driving economic growth and enhancing community vibrancy.



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5. What support would you provide for Caribbean-American students and parents, including language assistance and help navigating the school system?

**To support Caribbean-American students and their families, I will implement initiatives that provide language assistance and resources to help navigate the school system. This includes creating bilingual materials, hosting workshops for parents on educational processes, and establishing a dedicated liaison within schools to assist families from the Caribbean-American community. Additionally, I will advocate for cultural competency training for educators to ensure that they understand the unique backgrounds of their students and can provide tailored support.**

6. How would you advance partnerships with Caribbean-American community organizations to promote mental health, chronic disease prevention, or other wellness initiatives?

**I will actively seek to advance partnerships with Caribbean-American community organizations to promote mental health and chronic disease prevention initiatives. This includes collaborating on educational campaigns that address mental health stigma and providing access to culturally sensitive counseling services. We can also work together to offer workshops on nutrition, physical activity, and stress management that resonate with our community's cultural practices, ensuring that these wellness initiatives are both accessible and relevant.**

**In line with my global objectives, I am committed to studying and sourcing holistic alternatives from Caribbean countries to prevent chronic disease and promote wellness initiatives. This includes collaborating with local health organizations to explore traditional Caribbean remedies and practices that can contribute to healthier lifestyles. By integrating these holistic approaches into public health campaigns, we can provide our community with valuable resources and options that are culturally relevant and effective in addressing health disparities. Additionally, I will work to raise awareness of these alternatives through educational programs, workshops, and partnerships with Caribbean wellness experts, ultimately**



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**fostering a more comprehensive approach to health and wellness in our community.**

7. How will you build trust and conduct robust oversight on local, law enforcement to protect the rights, security, and safety of Caribbean-American residents?

**To build trust and ensure robust oversight of local law enforcement, I will establish a Community Policing mini commission that includes representatives from the Caribbean-American community. This board will provide input on policing practices, community concerns, and policy changes. As well as utilize input from the Ward 5 Citizen Advisory Council. I will advocate for regular training on cultural sensitivity and implicit bias for law enforcement officers. Additionally, I will support transparent reporting of police activities and hold regular town hall meetings to foster open communication between law enforcement and the community, ensuring that the rights, security, and safety of Caribbean-American residents are prioritized and protected.**

8. What programs, funding opportunities, or policy efforts will you champion that are aimed at improving outcomes for Caribbean-American communities?

**I will champion a range of programs and policies aimed at improving outcomes for Caribbean-American communities, including:**

**- Educational Support Programs:** Initiatives that provide tutoring, mentorship, and college readiness resources specifically designed for Caribbean-American students to enhance academic performance and access to higher education.

**- Economic Development Initiatives:** Securing funding for small business grants, workforce training, and entrepreneur development programs that target Caribbean-American entrepreneurs, empowering them to succeed and contribute to the local economy.



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**- Health Equity Programs:** Advocating for funding to support culturally appropriate health services focused on chronic disease prevention and mental health awareness in Caribbean-American communities.

9. How will you ensure that the Mayor's Office of Caribbean Community Affairs is fully funded, adequately staffed, and realizes its mission?

**To ensure that the Mayor's Office of Caribbean Community Affairs is fully funded, adequately staffed, and capable of realizing its mission, I will advocate for consistent budget allocations that reflect its importance within the community. I will work with local government and community stakeholders to assess staffing needs and ensure that the office has personnel who are knowledgeable about Caribbean cultures and issues. Additionally, I will push for performance metrics to measure the office's impact and effectiveness, ensuring transparency and accountability in its operations.**

10. Washington, D.C. adopted the [Local Resident Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2022](#), which permits noncitizens who reside in D.C. for at least 30 days before the election and are at least 18 years old to vote for local offices and ballot initiatives. How will you support awareness and implementation of this law?

**I am not opposed to this law. To support awareness and implementation of the Local Resident Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2022, I will launch educational campaigns in collaboration with community organizations to inform noncitizens about their voting rights and the registration process. This includes hosting multilingual workshops and outreach events to ensure all residents, particularly Caribbean-American communities, understand how to register and participate in local elections. Additionally, I**



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**will advocate for the allocation of resources to ensure the sufficient staffing of election offices, enabling them to assist eligible noncitizen voters effectively.**