



The Caribbean-American Political Action Committee (C-PAC)

District of Columbia – 2026 Candidate Questionnaire

Office Sought: Mayor of the District of Columbia

Candidate's Name: Talib I. Karim Muhammad, Esq.

Current Occupation: Engineer, Attorney, Tech Founder

Party: Independent

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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? My engagement with the Caribbean-American community is deeply rooted in my bloodline and my lifelong commitments. My mother was the daughter of an immigrant mom, born in the Panama Canal zone, while her father and grandfather—who hailed from Trinidad and married Barbadian women—worked on the Canal. After settling in the States, my mother came to D.C., where she met my father during the 1968 Poor People's Campaign at the Lincoln Memorial.

I carry that legacy of civil rights and Pan-Africanism with me. While a double graduate at Howard University, I was highly active in the Caribbean, African, and Haitian Student Associations. As a proud member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., my brotherhood spans across the diaspora. My administration intends to honor and respect all our cultures. I plan to proactively engage local leaders by establishing a permanent, direct line of communication between my executive team and C-PAC, and I aim to ensure Caribbean voices are heavily represented in my cabinet and on critical city boards.

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? I do not just have theories on this; I have executive experience. Having served as Chief of Staff for the District's largest agency, the Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF), I managed the critical funds that provide healthcare for our low-income, immigrant, and elderly residents. I know exactly where the bureaucratic bottlenecks are.

Our "Make DC Free" manifesto is explicitly designed to dismantle these barriers. To address legal and financial hurdles—especially given the increasingly hostile posture of the current federal administration toward immigrants—my administration intends to implement our **Immigrant Worker Support** initiative. This provides free legal services and direct payment of immigration fees for residents and families who have worked in D.C. for at least one year. Furthermore, we plan to launch a Universal Basic Income (UBI) feasibility study and an app designed to provide direct financial incentives to stabilize working Caribbean-American households.

3. How do you ensure culturally responsive services for Caribbean-American residents across agencies (e.g., health, education, law enforcement, etc.)? Before making policy, I covered it as a reporter for the *Washington Informer*, *Afro American*, *WPFW* and *WAMU*. I spent years listening to and being mentored by the voices of Caribbean legends like Vaughn Martin and Verna Avery Brown. I share the lived realities of Caribbean and other D.C. residents who felt ignored by culturally blind local government services.

As an engineer and systems thinker, I plan to deploy AI tools to audit District contracts and agency performance to verify that cultural competency training is mandatory and effective across all public-facing roles. Furthermore, my "Fixing Our Families" platform emphasizes community-based health solutions, such as mandating health insurance coverage for free marriage and family counseling. We intend to partner with culturally competent, Caribbean-led health organizations to provide these services so that our families feel understood, respected, and healed.

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? Caribbean-American small businesses are the economic engine of the District. To protect them, I have proposed the **Local Tech Startup Competition**, a \$1.5 million city-wide prize fund for locally owned startups to propose technical solutions for safety and economic stability. We also plan to launch a \$1 million "Job Matcher" app to directly connect D.C. residents to local roles. Finally, to protect the assets built by Caribbean-American families, we aim to implement our **Generational Wealth Protection** plan, providing free wills and estate planning for 5,000 seniors to ensure District property and business assets stay securely in the family for generations.

5. What support would you provide for Caribbean-American students and parents, including language assistance and help navigating the school system? I began my service to D.C. youth as a Math Teacher Assistant at Fletcher Johnson Middle School. I know the challenges our students face. Later, as an executive, I secured over \$500 million in federal grants for HBCUs and STEM pipelines. I know how to navigate and fund educational excellence.

My administration plans to introduce mandatory parenting and child development courses starting in middle school to prepare our youth for leadership. For parents, we intend to use our UBI app to provide financial incentives for engaging in family stability training. We aim to ensure the D.C. school system is fully staffed with culturally competent navigators and language access professionals to assist Caribbean-American families in strongly advocating for their children.

6. How would you advance partnerships with Caribbean-American community organizations to promote mental health, chronic disease prevention, or other wellness initiatives? As Senior Counsel to the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, I led the mission to automate and digitize veteran benefit claims, bringing engineering precision to wellness programs. I plan to bring that same efficiency to D.C. health partnerships.

My public safety platform recognizes that community health is safety. We intend to advance partnerships with Caribbean-American organizations by directly funding them to provide our proposed "Relationship Restoration" services. This includes specialized coaching to address family toxicity before it escalates. By granting funds directly to trusted Caribbean organizations, we seek to ensure that wellness programs are delivered rapidly, efficiently, and in a culturally resonant manner.

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? I have viewed the justice system from every angle: serving on the legal support staff for Judge Kaye Christian, and later as Chief Counsel for Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Chairwoman of the House Crime Subcommittee.

We intend to build trust by fundamentally restructuring how justice and policing operate. First, my administration pledges a \$150 million Legal Defense Fund to protect our immigrant populations from federal overreach. Second, I plan to establish D.C. as a "Tactical Sanctuary," which includes an immediate ban on all shared training between the MPD and foreign militaries, ensuring our police force operates as community guardians. We also aim to introduce "Victim's Choice" restorative justice models that prioritize direct restitution to affected families over the prison state.

8. What programs, funding opportunities, or policy efforts will you champion that are aimed at improving outcomes for Caribbean-American communities? Having served as Counsel to the Special D.C. Council Committee on Statehood, my overarching goal remains achieving D.C. Statehood to end "Taxation Without Representation." By achieving this, we intend to reclaim \$3.2 billion in annual lost revenue currently flowing to the federal government.

I also plan to immediately redirect the current \$51 million local surplus away from wasteful contracts and into our "Safe, Affordable, and Free" blueprint. With the permission of our Creator, we will funnel these funds directly into community outcomes, affordable housing, and legal protections for the Caribbean-American community.

9. How will you ensure that the Mayor's Office of Caribbean Community Affairs (MOCCA) is fully funded, adequately staffed, and realizes its mission? During my tenure as Special Counsel to Mayor Vincent Gray, I witnessed firsthand how vital community offices can be sidelined if they lack executive backing. I intend to ensure MOCCA is never an afterthought in my administration; it is meant to be a cornerstone of our Pan-African and inclusive governance strategy. By auditing District contracts to eliminate "Billionaire-First" waste, we plan to free up the capital necessary to fully fund MOCCA. The office is to be tasked with acting as a direct, empowered liaison for implementing our generational wealth and small business protection programs.

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? As a U.S. Air Force Reserve Veteran, I stood ready to defend democracy. It is unacceptable to fight for voting rights while simultaneously ignoring the disenfranchisement of hard-working Caribbean immigrants who pay taxes and build our local economy.

I strongly support the Local Resident Voting Rights Amendment Act. We plan to use our community outreach directors, partner with C-PAC, and utilize MOCCA to conduct massive, multi-lingual voter education drives to guarantee every eligible Caribbean-American resident is registered, aware of their rights, and mobilized to vote. Our campaign is built to empower the 85% of residents who have been left out of the political process, and the Caribbean-American community is central to that victory.