

2022 Black Voters Guide Questionnaire

DC Council At-Large Election

Karim D. Marshall Responses

The Black Voter Guide Project is a nonprofit, non-partisan engagement effort by ElevateHer, Inc., a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization.

Being Well While Black (BWWB) brought together as many Black local residents as possible to share their top issues and priorities for our communities in 2022. This is an opportunity for you as a candidate to answer their questions and Black health concerns within Washington, DC. Answers will drive the development of our Black Voter Guide.

Even if a question is not directly in the scope of responsibility of the position you are pursuing, PLEASE RESPOND TO EACH QUESTION. Residents will appreciate knowing where all candidates stand on issues that are important for Black communities.

A. Healthcare: Background Data

According to a major study at Georgetown University:

“The report showed a side-by-side comparison between the residents of Ward 8, where more than 90% of residents are Black, and Ward 3, where only 5% of residents are Black. Residents in Ward 3 have much higher household incomes, greater access to health care providers and more access to quality education than their Ward 8 counterparts. Regarding the health consequences of such disparities, the researchers found that the average resident in Ward 3 will live 16 years longer than the average resident in Ward 8. Ward 3 residents are also 2.5 times less likely to die from cancer and four times less likely to die from heart disease.” [Georgetown Report Highlights Racial Disparities in Health in DC \(thehoya.com\)](#) This data aligns with the DC Government Health Needs Assessment Report of 2019: [DOH CHNA ExecSummary WEB spreads 2-14-2020 Reduced.pdf \(dc.gov\)](#)

Related Questions:

1. What do you plan to do to increase the number of hospital facilities and access to affordable physical and mental healthcare in order to reduce the health care access disparities for Black DC residents, especially in Wards 7 and 8?

Your Response: An urgent care run by MBI recently opened in Ward 7, and one is planned for Ward 8, but there needs to be more intentionality and coordination with existing health services in Wards 7&8 to build a true health system East of the River. These facilities will bring much needed maternity services, physical trauma treatment, and preventative care to historically underserved communities. However, the District must do much more to provide urgent care facilities and locations for doctor offices that can provide the full constellation of preventative mental, dental, and physical health services. As the next At-Large Councilmember, I will work with my colleagues and the executive to create an equitable healthcare placement plan which ensures that healthcare assets are deployed to serve our neediest residents and that residents are aware of these resources. I will also work to incentivize the increased participation of Black residents in healthcare careers so that Black residents can be served by providers that are culturally competent and representative of the community.

2. If elected will you support continued allowance of tele health and provide funding for expanded equipment and internet access scheduled to be discontinued after the COVID pandemic expires? See Section 1. In the article:
<https://www.hklaw.com/en/insights/publications/2022/01/2022-congressional-outlook-and-top-10-federal-health-policy-issues>

Your Response: Yes

B. Education: Background Data

Data has been found that documents possible reasons for the educational achievement gaps between Black and White students in DC that result in lower graduation rates from high school. These include disproportionate use of punishments such as suspension and expulsions that push students out of school; insufficient resources and lower quality education in

predominantly Black schools, particularly in low income neighborhoods; the overuse of police and an underuse of school counselors in predominantly Black schools.

[DC Students Educational Outcomes Gaps Are Massive \(dckidscount.org\)](https://dckidscount.org)

[D.C.'s Achievement Gap: Why Place Matters - The Annie E. Casey Foundation \(aecf.org\)](https://aecf.org)

Related Questions:

1. What are your plans to address the above noted issues of underfunding and inadequate educational resources; unfair and excessive punishment; and lower educational standards for Black students in DC schools that are clearly interfering with school motivation, performance and graduation rates?

Your Response: Please see my answer below to question 2, it addresses both points.

2. How do you plan to offset the less than needed increase in education and training budget in the recently passed bill for the upcoming year if you are elected?

<https://www.ccdaily.com/2022/03/washington-watch-congress-releases-fy-22-spending-bill/>

Your Response: This article and question appear to be mostly about federal appropriations. As the next At-Large Councilmember, I can work with our representative in Congress to secure additional funding, but my primary focus will be on the smart use of locally available resources. I will fight to ensure that the per pupil formula is revised to promote equitable distribution of resources. I believe that every student is entitled to a culturally competent and responsive education that prepares them for success in life and beyond. Part of that is ensuring that our children are safe in school but avoiding the risk of habituating them to a militarized or correctional-style environment.

I would also advocate for increased flexibility in the educational experience for our learners. As the next At-Large Councilmember, I will fight to modernize the public education model to give our teachers the flexibility to build classrooms that bring the best out of every learner. Our public education system is the most impactful mechanism available to provide opportunities to our students. We should make sure that our learners that want to attend College are prepared to compete for admission to the most competitive schools. But, if a student wants to pursue a career in trades, coding, or as a business owner, they should be

provided with the skills necessary to earn a living and the business knowledge necessary to maintain and grow their success.

C. Economic Development: Background Data

In 2015, over 40% of Black persons in DC lived in either “poverty” or “high poverty” neighborhoods in comparison to whites, whereby 90% lived in neither of the poverty categories.

[Concentrated Poverty – The Critical Mass - D.C. Policy Center \(dcpolicycenter.org\)](https://dcpolicycenter.org/concentrated-poverty/)

In a report, “Historic Context of Racial Inequality in Washington, DC” the racial disparity in home ownership and home values in 2014 was as follows: 78 percent of Whites owned homes with a median value of \$375,000 (where 81% of household heads had a high school diploma), compared with 58 percent of Black people whose homes had a median value of \$250,000 (where 61% of these household heads had a college degree).

[historical_context_of_racial_inequity_in_dc - kilolo kijakazi testimony 1.pdf \(urban.org\)](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/101261/historical-context-of-racial-inequity-in-dc-kilolo-kijakazi-testimony-1.pdf)

Related Questions:

1. What will you do to increase affordable housing for all Black DC residents and in particular to enable Black senior citizens to remain in their homes.

Your Response: The District has many programs to help residents become homeowners and we are likely to see more programs announced this year, but as a recent homebuyer, I can attest they are poorly coordinated and poorly administered. As Councilmember I would work with the relevant agencies to increase the transparency and coordination of home ownership and home construction incentive/subsidy programs. I would also work to ensure that program participants are able to be rapidly qualified and that qualifications were valid for a period long enough to last through the entire homebuying process.

- **Automatic enrollment - I would revise the statutory requirements for the Homestead Deduction to automatically enroll new homebuyers into the protections afforded by this program.**
- **Senior Property Value Assessment Freeze – I would amend District Law so that any Senior that lived on a fixed income below a set standard would have the valuation of**

their home frozen so that their property taxes did not increase with the assessed value of their homes while they still lived in the house.

- Student Loan allowance - I would also advocate to adjust the eligibility for any programs that are funded with local dollars to exclude non-dischargeable debt (such as student loans) from the debt-to-income ratio to determine eligibility for home purchase programs.
- Home Purchase Assistance Program - I would overhaul the program so that qualification for the program lasted a full year, was less burdensome, and was proactively renewed. HPAP participants have frequently reported that they cannot compete with more well-resourced buyers not because of offer price, but because the HPAP program is so much more complicated and slower than a conventional buyer's financing.

Further, the District's programs are not particularly transparent or understandable to the average resident. The government should aggressively partner with entities like DCAR to provide early education on housing purchase programs and financial literacy. Residents may need multiple points of exposure before they fully understand that home ownership is within their reach, but the American dream is too important to leave to chance.

Transparency would also cure much of the skepticism that residents have regarding these programs. For example, listening to voters, there is a resounding consensus amongst residents that programs like Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) only work for the politically well-connected. I know the dedicated public servants who run these programs, their challenge is being under-resourced. They could also benefit from more reliable grant partners and an upgrade in the IT system used to administer IZ. I would further reform the IZ lottery program to make a resident's placement and place on the IZ list more transparently known to low- to moderate-income residents. Your likelihood of quality housing shouldn't feel like random chance.

2. Which of the 24 pending bills impacting economic development for Washington DC do you promise to vigorously support and why?

<https://legiscan.com/DC/pending/council-business-economic-development-committee/id/3617>

Your Response: Thirteen are proposed resolutions to confirm a nominee (PR24-0903, PR24-0641, PR24-0639, PR24-0640, PR24-0642, PR24-0484, PR24-0079, PR24-0074, PR24-0076,

PR24-0073, PR24-0072, PR24-0077, PR24-0078). I could not take a position on any nominees without the opportunity to interview them.

I would support several of the pending bills, but a good example of a bill in line with my priority of developing and supporting Black business development is B24-0851, the State Small Business Credit Initiative Venture Capital Program Grant-Making Establishment Act of 2022. This bill would create a useful grantmaking authority that can be used creatively to promote the growth and development of Black businesses which have been historically denied access to capital.

As the next At-Large Councilmember, I would fight to make sure that the District government is providing tools to empower and grow small businesses. It is critically important to me that Black residents can create and grow businesses to gain economic independence.

D. Civil Rights and Social Justice: Background Data

According to an ACLU report, between 2013 and 2017, the Black population of DC was 47%. However, Blacks comprised arrests at a rate of 86%. This represented an arrest rate of Blacks that was 10 times greater than that for Whites. [Racial Disparities in D.C. Policing: Descriptive Evidence from 2013–2017 | ACLU of DC \(acludc.org\)](#)

Related Questions:

1. What will you do to promote police reform in order to reduce racial bias in policing in DC?

Your Response: *As the next At-Large Councilmember, I will work to improve recruitment of DC police officers from residents. The current police force doesn't have enough residents or native Washingtonians. The subtle cultural competencies that come from having a police force that reflects the community it is sworn to serve has a marked improvement on the ability to avoid the use of force, de-escalate conflicts, and solve crimes which rely on the cooperation of the community. Further, I would ensure that officers are able to afford to live in the District. If the District's goal is to have a localized police force, we have to make sure they can afford to continue to live in the District.*

2. If elected what will you do to do to support the community and the DC police department efforts to improve quality of services? <https://dcist.com/story/21/12/18/dc-police-panel-blocked-mpd-firings/>

Your Response: As the next At-Large Councilmember, I will take an active role in the development of criteria for public-sector worker labor agreements; the Adverse Action Panel should be replaced by a neutral arbiter that can objectively review disciplinary decisions. I will also incentivize police officers to anonymously report other officers for the abuses committed by their fellow officers. I will require MPD to review the employment history and reason for termination of any potential lateral transfer before hiring new officers from other jurisdictions.

E. DC Statehood: Background Data

As of 2022, a DC report issued the following: In addition to the fact that DC residents in general bear the unfairness of the burdens and responsibilities of citizenship without the fair representation in our government as a state; the lack of DC statehood is further disenfranchisement of Black voters, given that Blacks represent 47% of DC population (41 % White; 11% Hispanic and 4% Asian). [Why Statehood for DC | statehood](#)

Related Questions:

1. What will you do to push forth the effort to gain DC residents DC Statehood and the right to full self-government and voter representation?

Your Response: The fight for Statehood is now fully about educating voters in other jurisdictions. I have spoken at law schools, education panels, non-profit conferences, professional conferences. At every opportunity I tell people around the country and the world that the more than half million District residents are disenfranchised and that they can correct this injustice. As residents, we have to use every platform available to convince our fellow citizens to support statehood. As the next At-Large Councilmember, I will continue to do so.

2. If elected who would you support to be mentored by Representative Elenor Holmes Norton to support the efforts for equal representation and full citizenship for the residents of the District of Columbia? <https://norton.house.gov/issues/why-dc-should-be-a-state>

Your Response: I do not know who is running in the 2024 or subsequent elections, but I look forward to supporting the candidate that prioritizes full citizenship and equal representation for the residents of the District of Columbia. I believe that pursuing Statehood is EVERYONE's responsibility.

F. Gun Control:

Note: This question was recently added on 5/25/22, due to the very recent mass shootings at the Tops supermarket in Buffalo, NY (5/14/22) and at the elementary school in Uvalde, TX (5/24/22) and the significantly increased incidence of such gun related violence.

Question:

1. If elected, what will you do to control the purchase and the use of guns?

Your Response: Relative to population, there are very few legal guns in the District of Columbia. The vast majority of firearms here were illegally obtained. The government must be more thoughtful about partnering with federal and neighboring jurisdictions to interdict and apprehend the shadow arms dealers that are flooding our neighborhoods with guns.