



**VOTERS**

**FOR ANIMALS**

## Candidate Questionnaire - DCVFA

DC Voters for Animals ([dcvfa.com](http://dcvfa.com)) elevates the candidates who differentiate themselves on animal values. Please complete the questionnaire to indicate how your priorities align with those of DC's animal lovers. You can elaborate at the end of the document on any of your answers.

**Candidate:** Karim D. Marshall, Esq.

Q1: Are there animals who have personally impacted your life?

Yes, my family has often included animals. They were a calming and rewarding presence in our lives and we were honored to have them as companions.

Will you publish information on your campaign website/social media describing your platform supporting non-human animals?\*

Yes

**Affordable Housing: Increase Access for Residents with Pets**

People who live with pets know firsthand how intimately they are part of the family. In fact, about 56% of households nationwide have pets, regardless of income level or housing policies (1). Yet, the 20,000 District tenants living in DCHA public housing units are prohibited from having pets in their homes. While 44% of housing providers in DC allow pets, DCHA generally prohibits pets, with limited exceptions (i.e. service and assistance animals) (2) (3). DCHA's restrictive policy discriminates against District residents by their source of income, disproportionately impacts people of color, and forces families to pick between their pets and the affordable housing they need. This exacerbates housing instability in DC's communities, which, as one of the main drivers of community health, leads to poorer health outcomes for DCHA residents (4).

Jurisdictions friendly to pets in affordable housing: Countless other jurisdictions allow pets in public housing, including NYCHA, the largest public housing authority in the country! In fact, DCHA had to obtain permission from the federal government in order to implement the ban on companion animals (5).

(1) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2019/01/31/how-many-americans-have-pets-an-investigation-into-fuzzy-statistics/>

(2) <https://wtop.com/real-estate/2017/09/dc-rent-among-nations-highest-apartments-pet-friendly/>

(3) <http://dcrules.elaws.us/dcmr/14-6126>

(4) [https://dchealth.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/doh/publication/attachments/HER\\_Summary\\_Report\\_FINAL\\_with\\_letter\\_and\\_table\\_02\\_08\\_2019.pdf](https://dchealth.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/doh/publication/attachments/HER_Summary_Report_FINAL_with_letter_and_table_02_08_2019.pdf)

(5) <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/nycha-pet-policy-2018.pdf>

Question: Would you advocate for DC Housing Authority (DCHA) to allow residents of public housing units to live with their pets?\*

Yes, once the Housing Authority has demonstrated that they have the resources and expertise to adequately maintain their existing and planned properties to be suitable for habitation, I would support

working with our federal partners to expand access to these units for families which included non-human animals.

#### Cruelty from Animal Fur

The fur industry uses millions of animals who are kept in tiny cages on factory farms and killed in cruel ways, or trapped in the wild where they are often left to suffer for days (1). Advancements in faux fur have made it virtually indiscernible to animal fur (2). Not only have many local and national governments issued fur bans, hundreds of retailers have independently phased out fur. DC should make being cruelty free the new fashion statement!

Who bans fur: Over a dozen countries have banned fur farming, and Israel recently became the first to ban sales. A dozen cities in the US have banned fur sales, as well as the entire state of California (3).

(1) <https://www.hsi.org/news-media/fur-trade/>

(2) <https://blog.shannonfabrics.com/blog/2019/09/27/real-genuine-fur-versus-faux-fake-fur-compared>

(3) <https://www.furfreealliance.com/fur-bans/>

Question: Would you support a law to ban fur sales in DC?\*

Yes, I support and have worked on bills as a legislative staffer and as Legislative Director of the Department of Energy and Environment to prohibit the trafficking in animal products including ivory and fur.

#### Ending Force-Feeding of Farm Animals

Foie gras is known to be one of the most extreme forms of animal agriculture. The production process includes force feeding the duck or farm animal with a metal tube that is inserted in its esophagus in order to enlarge its liver. Despite being home to over 1,000 restaurants that serve foie gras, New York City banned the sale of products from force-fed animals in 2020 (1). Abandoning this uncommon yet cruel factory farming practice is a fantastic way for DC to show its compassion.

Who bans foie gras: New York City, California, India (import), Argentina, Australia, Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Poland, and the UK (production) (2).

(1) <https://animalequality.org/blog/2019/11/05/new-york-city-foie-gras-ban-explained/>

(2) <https://animalequality.org/blog/2022/04/13/is-foie-gras-illegal-in-the-us/>

Question: Would you support legislation prohibiting the sale of food made from force fed animals (such as foie gras) in the District?\*

**Yes**

#### Mayoral Animal Welfare Liaison

DC government provides liaisons for LGBTQ, Latinx, African, and African-American communities, among others (1). An Animal Welfare Liaison can serve under the mayor to fulfill many roles, including working with relevant city departments, fielding constituent concerns, and addressing neglected components of the city's animal laws.

Who has an Animal Welfare Liaison: New York City, Borough of Brooklyn, and Montreal

(1) <https://moca.dc.gov/page/community-affairs-offices>

Question: Would you support creating and funding an Animal Welfare Liaison position within the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs? \*

Other: It depends, I would be interested in learning more why the existing methods of animal advocacy through the Humane Society and the Department of Health is not considered sufficient and what are the expected measures of success.



### Bird-Safe Buildings

It is estimated that up to a billion birds die every year in North America due to collisions with buildings (1). Our feathered friends often have difficulty seeing glass surfaces, particularly because birds with eyes positioned on either side of their head that have more difficulty with depth-perception. Studies demonstrate that almost all collisions are with structures under 12 stories tall, with 44% occurring with structures one to three stories (2). To help remedy this growing problem, new features have been designed to help birds realize the presence of the glass beforehand and greatly improve the avoidance of collisions.

Who has bird safe building legislation: New York City, NY ; San Francisco, CA; Oakland, CA; Madison, WI; Cook County, IL; Toronto, CAN.

(1) <https://www.fws.gov/birds/bird-enthusiasts/threats-to-birds.php>

(2) <https://www.audubon.org/news/hundreds-millions-birds-killed-annually-building-collisions-0>

Question: Would you support a law that updates D.C.'s building code to require that new builds employ bird-safe glass and building design to curb bird collision mortality?\*

Yes, I would support the requirement in law and making the corresponding regulatory updates to the building code. I am the only candidate that has the experience in regulatory reform to ensure that these changes make it into the revision to the building code in the next cycle and that they are properly supported to encourage widespread and eager adoption by the builder community. The good news is that there is already significant scientific research by the American Bird Conservancy which has scientifically tested various methods of increasing building visibility. While birds cannot perceive depth in the same way as humans, they CAN see the UV spectrum, which provides an easy way for architects and engineers to make their buildings more bird-friendly by adjusting their materials without significant or expensive changes to design. Additionally, some of the materials that rely on UV reflective materials have the additional building of make the building more energy efficient!

### Transparency in Meat Processing Plants

The pandemic illuminated immense problems in slaughterhouses for labor, animal welfare, and public health. Workers were crammed together as COVID-19 spread like wildfire through meat processing plants, and kill lines for animals were sped up at both a cost to the workers and the immense suffering of animals. DC could inform consumers by passing a law to track workplace injuries, animal welfare violations, and antibiotics consumption at meat processing facilities for food imported into the District.

Who tracks data from meat processing plants? San Francisco, CA

Question: Would you support legislation to track data from labor, animal welfare, and health performance for food imported from slaughterhouses?\*

Yes, but as the District doesn't have any slaughterhouses or meat processing plants in the District, we would have to be very deliberate about how this policy is implemented and enforced. I believe that more information leads to better choices.

Which of the above initiatives would be a priority for you? Are there other initiatives to make DC a leader for animals that would be important for you?\*

Increasing the availability and condition of low-income and affordable housing would be one of my highest priorities. Allowing families of all configurations in live in safety and dignity would encourage several additional benefits which would improve the lives of humans and animals.

Anything you care to elaborate on?

I think it is important that people who eat meat recognize that a living, breathing being had to have its life ended to become food. Therefore, even if people don't want to become vegetarian or vegan, recognition of that fact would at least encourage them to respect the sacrifice and demand better conditions for animals.