

## **Jim Graham, Candidate for Ward 1 City Council**

### **Candidate Questionnaire**

#### Human Rights

As a Councilmember, what will you do to help ensure that the marriage rights secured for DC's LGBT Community remain intact?

*In order to ensure that marriage rights for the District's LGBT community stay intact, I will fight to keep marriage equality off the ballot, as that is a clear violation of DC's Human Rights Act. Ultimately, the Courts decide whether a voter referendum is allowable and, thus far, all judicial challenges to marriage rights have been denied. My role as a Councilman and citizen is to continue educating the public about marriage equality and its benefits for the community as a whole. The other challenge to marriage equality would come from Congress, most likely as an attachment to an unrelated bill. This is a very real danger. I will work with my fellow Council members in lobbying Congress to make this scenario less likely. With a narrow Democratic majority in the Senate and a vulnerable majority in the House, it is imperative that we continue advocating for our rights on The Hill, especially since some of the challenges to our new-found freedoms come from within the Democratic Party.*

Would you be supportive of the Mayor's Office of LGBT Affairs having grant making authority and an increased budget to provide grants to 501c3 organizations in the District providing services to the LGBT community?

*Yes, I am in favor of the Mayor's Office of LGBT Affairs having grant making authority and an increased budget to supplement the funding opportunities available to DC's 501c3 organizations serving the LGBT community. With the onset of the economic depression in 2008, private foundations had to reduce their overall giving, so it is important that the DC government make up some of these organizations' funding void.*

As a legislator, what can and/or will you do to support increased funding or assist in securing additional funding for LGBT social service organizations such as the DC Center, the Mautner Project, SMYAL, Metro Teen AIDS, and Transgender Health Empowerment?

*The harsh budgetary realities of 2009 and 2010 caused the District to cut funding to a number of deserving LGBT social organizations and projections for next year suggest that the city will have to make similarly tough choices then. As a legislator, I will work with these organizations to find alternative sources to compensate for the lost revenue*

*from the city. I do support increased grant opportunities through the Office of LGBT Affairs; however, that office will have finite resources with which to assist these organizations. Part of the solution to this problem lies in pushing for more budgetary autonomy for the District and, of course, making tough decisions when it comes to trimming waste from the District government. I am always looking at ways to make the government operate more efficiently.*

As a legislator, what can and/or will you do to advocate for increased education, job training, and hiring of transgendered people?

*As the author of the city's Human Rights Act forbidding discrimination based on gender identity or expression, this is an important issue for me. I can work with the Office of LGBT Affairs to bring more transgender-targeted job fairs to the city. This will give transgender residents an opportunity to attend such fairs without fear of being harassed, which may occur at the more mainstream fairs. Transgender Health Empowerment, the National Center for Transgender Equality, Us Helping Us, Whitman-Walker Clinic and other organizations can help to advertise these fairs. In addition, I know several business leaders throughout the city and will speak with them about the job training opportunities at their companies/businesses and strongly encourage them to hire transgendered people.*

Do you support mandatory sensitivity training in workplaces that have transgender employees or new hires who may be transgender?

*While it is difficult to mandate sensitivity training, I strongly encourage workplaces to periodically conduct sensitivity training for their employees in order to make the workplace more accepting for employees who are transgender. The Office of LGBT Affairs' Director regularly meets with DC Department of Employment Services (DOES) and addresses transgender sensitivity with the DOES employees.*

In the past, what LGBT related events, activities, or organizations have you participated in or been a member of or are currently a member of?

*From 1984 to 1998, I was Executive Director of Whitman-Walker Clinic. I have also been a member of the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club since 1980.*

Do you have any self identified LGBT staff or campaign volunteers, and if so, how many? How racially and ethnically diverse is your office?

*I represent the most diverse ward in the city, and my staff reflects that. I have an openly gay legislative director and deputy director. Seven out of the eleven members of my staff are minority group members. I have the highest ranking Latino on the council staff.*

## Public Safety

Given that the GLLU is one of the only LGBT related units in the country, will you support and advocate for the Metropolitan Police Department to increase the current staffing, as well as support the hiring of a full time sergeant who understands the LGBT community and LGBT policing?

*I am fully supportive of the unit hiring more officers as well as a full-time sergeant. While I understand and support efforts to train all of the MPD officers to address LGBT-related concerns, it is important that the GLLU stay intact as a centralized unit that LGBT residents can contact to address their needs.*

Will you advocate for the executive office of the mayor to establish policy requiring agency directors to implement mandatory training for all members of DCPS, Fire and EMS workers regarding LGBT people (including LGBT people of color, those that are limited English proficient, and those that are disabled)?

*Yes, mandatory training for all members of DCPS, Fire and EMS workers regarding the spectrum of LGBT people is necessary as new employees and workers are brought on board. I fully support the establishment of a policy requiring the agency directors to implement this.*

As a legislator, what can and/or will you do to insure that the District is aggressively responding to the increase in incidents of hate crimes against the LGBT community that have been occurring over the last two years, aside from holding yearly hearings on the issue?

*As a legislator, I have and will continue to support the Chief of Police's efforts to keep more officers out on the street, patrolling in neighborhoods throughout the city. I will also help organize LGBT orange hat patrols just as I have pushed for the mainstream citizen patrol groups in especially troubled parts of the city. I have and will continue to push for youth development and education programs, which will keep youth off the streets. This is important because so many of the hate crimes committed against the LGBT community have been perpetuated by young people who fall prey to criminal elements because they have limited opportunities. On the other hand, I co-introduced legislation to establish a Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform for ensure the City is rehabilitating youth offenders before they commit violent crimes. I will also push the establishment of more gay-straight alliances in public schools, as these groups encourage dialogue and understanding between LGBT and heterosexual youth. This*

*understanding will move into adulthood and will in the long run reduce the incidents of hate crimes perpetuated against the LGBT community. As an openly gay legislator, I will continue using the bully pulpit of the Council to educate the public at large about the LGBT community and build bridges between communities, which can help reduce the number of hate crimes.*

As a legislator, will you be committed to working to stop the DC Department of Corrections policy of relying on genitalia as a basis for gender identification rather than an individual's gender identity or expression?

*I will work to stop this policy within the DC Department of Corrections. Relying on genitalia to identify someone's gender is incredibly misguided and interferes with the effectiveness of the Department of Corrections' goals.*

## Education and Youth

Do you support the current DC Board of Education's Health Standards that include discussions of sexual orientation in learning about sex education in public schools?

*I support the inclusion of sexual orientation in the public school's current sex education curriculum and want to work with the DC Board of Education to update and improve those health standards periodically.*

Do you support DCPS leadership in advocating for additional mandatory teacher and faculty training in all DC public schools regarding LGBT student safety?

*Yes, to ensure the safety of LGBT students in all public schools, I support DCPS leaders seeking additional mandatory teacher and faculty training on LGBT student safety.*

As a legislator, what can and/or will you do to hold DCPS, OSSE, and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education accountable for making sure that all LGBT students can learn in a safe and supportive environment?

*I will address this issue in meetings with DC Public Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee and with DCPS representatives, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education and the Victor Reinoso, the Deputy Mayor for Education, and report back to the community on the progress that has been made. I will also push for stronger enforcement among charter schools by requiring all charter schools receiving funding through President Obama's Race to the Top program (for which the District has applied) to ensure all LGBT students have a safe and supportive environment in which to learn.*

As a legislator, what can and/or will you do to support after school activities and initiatives that specifically include the needs of LGBT youth?

*As a legislator, I will work with Chancellor Rhee's office and the Office of LGBT Affairs to ensure that after school initiatives are inclusive of LGBT students' needs. I will work with the Office of the Mayor to ensure the Chancellor provides periodic updates to me on this issue.*

## Health/HIV/AIDS

As a legislator, what can and/or will you do to hold the HIV/AIDS Administration and the Department of Health accountable for aggressively working to develop and implement a strategy to reduce the unacceptably high HIV/AIDS rate among the District's LGBT community, specifically LGBT communities of color and the transgender community?

*I will work with Dr. Shannon Hader, Director of the HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD, and TB Administration (HAHSTA), to ensure that the city services available for HIV prevention are widely publicized, as are the treatment programs. Much like the city's educational system, DC spends a lot of money on HIV/AIDS prevention and support services, but those resources are not fully utilized. HIV stigma has a lot to do with this, but so does lack of knowledge about city services. For example, the city does partner with several community-based organizations to distribute free condoms, but many residents are unfamiliar with where to get free condoms in their communities. Likewise, drug addiction is a major avenue for the spread of HIV within the LGBT community, including LGBT communities of color and the transgender community. The city's needle exchange program has begun to turn around the spread of HIV through needles in the past year or so, but fear and lack of knowledge about the needle exchange prevent those could benefit most by it from using it. Ultimately, the District needs to reduce the drug use among its residents that contributes to the spread of HIV. Toward that goal, I co-sponsored legislation to provide free and immediate access to drug treatment programs and will work to ensure that residents are aware of these programs.*

*Of course, skyrocketing HIV rates are not exclusive to the District, so I believe in taking a regional approach to this problem by working with the surrounding jurisdictions on HIV prevention, education and support services. Many gay and bisexual men in the District, for example, have sex with men in Baltimore. Therefore, prevention programs here don't always reach the residents who mainly interact sexually with men in nearby areas, like Baltimore. I would like to set up a commission within HAHSTA that addresses*

*regional HIV prevention and education.*

*As comprehensive sex education in District schools improves, the rates of HIV infection should decline among both LGBTs and heterosexuals. This can only happen if sexual orientation is included in the sex education curriculum, as I mentioned earlier. Including it will decrease stigma related to being LGBT and make it easier for HIV prevention messaging to reach our young people. I am committed to ensuring this happens.*

### DC Taxi Cab Meters

As a councilmember, will you hold the District government accountable for conducting the impact study of DC taxi cab meter rates every two years as the law requires?

*Yes, I will hold the District government accountable for conducting the impact study of DC taxi cab rates biannually as required by law and releasing the data from the study to the general public.*

When finished with the questionnaire, please email it to Tim Mahony, Vice President for Political Affairs at HYPERLINK "[http://www.vppoliticalaffairs@steindemocrats.org](mailto:www.vppoliticalaffairs@steindemocrats.org)" [www.vppoliticalaffairs@steindemocrats.org](http://www.vppoliticalaffairs@steindemocrats.org), or you can mail it to *Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, 1929 18<sup>th</sup> St., NW, PMB 2000, Washington, DC 20009.*

## **2010 City Council Candidate QUESTIONNAIRE**

**The Gertrude Stein Democratic Club  
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