

**2010 City Council Candidate QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**Response from Ward 5 Councilmember Harry “Tommy” Thomas, Jr.**

**General Statement from Councilmember Thomas**

Four years ago, I campaigned to bring responsive and focused leadership to the position of Ward 5 Councilmember. I promised to be a voice for change in the way our government operates. I committed to promoting open and inclusive government to better empower and protect the residents of Ward 5 and ensure we get our fair share of city resources. As your Councilmember, I have worked hand-in-hand with residents across Ward 5 to fulfill these pledges.

Together, we are making a difference. With your support, I commit to continue serving the residents of Ward 5 and the District of Columbia.

**Human Rights**

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

As a sitting councilmember who proudly voted for the marriage equality bill, I will oppose any measures introduced into the Council of the District of Columbia that would seek to roll back the hard won right to marry that the GLBT community has achieved.

**2. 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?**

The Office of LGBT Affairs has a strong track record of achievement, and I fully support the office having the authority to issue and monitor grants. I also fully support allocating funds to enable the Office of LGBT Affairs to offer grants, and expanding the office’s grants budget as revenue permits.

**3. 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?**

LGBT social service organizations provide important outreach programs, and in times of tight budgets, we must be more creative about funding. As Chair of the Committee on Libraries, Parks and Recreation, I will encourage DCPL and DPR to partner with LGBT social service organizations and fund programs and grants that target the LGBT community. As a member of the Committee on Aging and Community Affairs, I will work with the Office of LGBT Affairs to identify whether there are ways for the office to raise revenue that can be specifically allocated back to fund its programs, including an expanded grants program.

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

In general, I believe the District needs more job and vocational training opportunities for all residents, including transgendered people. As a member of the Committee on Housing and Workforce Development, one of my priorities is to expand job and vocational training opportunities

and ensure they are accessible to all residents of the District, regardless of sexual orientation. In addition, as a Ward councilmember, I have been working directly with developers who have projects in my Ward to ensure that PUD community amenities packages include a job readiness training component. My office has also worked directly with new businesses entering the ward, such as Forman Mills, to ensure that ward residents are hired. In the case of Forman Mills, half of the 150 workers hired were Ward 5 residents, and the other half were District residents from other wards.

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

I support sensitivity training in all workplaces, not just those that have or may have transgender employees.

**6. 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?**

I am currently a member of the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club. I attended the HRC event celebrating the passage of the marriage equality bill. I also proudly attended the marriage of two gay Ward 5 Bloomingdale residents that occurred in the Wilson Building. I have attended a number of other LGBT events to which I have been invited, and look forward to continued participation.

**7. 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 have a two LGBT liaisons working on my campaign as volunteers. On my Council staff, Victoria Leonard serves as my LGBT liaison. My full-time staff includes two men and six women. Seven members of my staff are African American, one is white. With the exception of one staff member, all reside in Ward 5.

Public Safety

**8. 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?**

Yes.

**9. 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. I believe all government workers, especially those who interact with the public, should be required to participate in sensitivity training that covers the importance of treating all people—including LGBT, people of color, disabled persons, and individuals not proficient in English—with respect and courtesy at all times.

**10. 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?**

I will support examining whether the penalties for committing hate crimes can be strengthened. I will also support expanding outreach with young people to promote tolerance and acceptance of all people, regardless of sexual orientation. I believe early intervention regarding the importance of tolerance and acceptance can reduce the level of hate crimes.

**11. 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?**

Yes. This policy is intrusive.

### Education and Youth

**12. 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?**

Yes.

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

Yes.

**14. 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?**

As part of my oversight responsibilities, I will ask these agencies to provide information and data on whether LGBT students are being afforded a safe and supportive environment in which to learn. My door is always open, and I am willing to meet with LGBT students who have concerns about their learning environment.

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

As Chair of the Committee on Libraries, Parks and Recreation, I will encourage both DCPL and DPR to review their afterschool programs and initiatives to ensure they specifically include the needs of LGBT youth. I will also encourage these agencies to confer with the Office of LGBT Affairs on how their programs can be strengthened to better incorporate the needs of LGBT youth.

### Health/HIV/AIDS

**16. 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?**

Ward 5 has one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in the city. I have and will continue to advocate for more outreach and intervention programs, and demand that DOH aggressively and comprehensively address HIV/AIDS. I take the District's HIV/AIDS epidemic seriously. I have

personally spoken at a number of youth forums about the importance of getting tested and practicing safe sex, and participate each year in Big Tigger's Annual Celebrity Classic which hosts a series of HIV/AIDS testing initiatives targeted to area youth and local residents .

### 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.