



**Metropolitan Washington Council
AFL-CIO**

**2018 District of Columbia
Committee on Political Education
PRIMARY ELECTIONS**

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Overview:

The Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO, is comprised of 185 local unions representing working people in all public industry sectors. The Metropolitan Washington Council AFL-CIO's priorities are outlined below:

- Creating family sustaining jobs for all;
- Investing in education, infrastructure, healthcare and transportation;
- Improving the lives of workers through education, quality job training, career advancement and livable wages with good benefits;
- Ensuring fair, progressive tax policies;
- Making high-quality, affordable healthcare available to everyone;
- Holding corporations and government more accountable to ensure that the public good
Is served by taxpayer dollars; and
- ensuring that a worker's universal right to organize and to bargain collectively for wages, hours and conditions of work are maintained and enforced.

Metropolitan Washington Council AFL-CIO

2018 CANDIDATE'S QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Name Bradley Thomas

Address 107 P Street, N.W.

City / County Washington, DC Zip 20001

Phone: _____ Mobile (202) 670-0151 Email bradleythomas4dc@gmail.com

Candidate for: D.C. Council – Ward 5

Campaign Committee Name and Address: The Committee to Elect Bradley Thomas

P.O. Box 77616, Washington, DC 20013

Campaign Committee Phone: (202) 670-0151 Email / Web www.bradleythomas4dc.com

Campaign Manager: Geovani Bonilla

Campaign Treasurer: Tracee L. Sanders

Does your campaign accept PAC contributions? No.

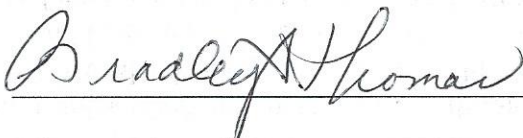
Previously elected / appointed office:

Office Commissioner ANC5E05 Term 2017-2018 Office Commissioner ANC5E Term 2015-2016 Office Commissioner ANC5C01 Term 2011-2012

Have you ever received labor's endorsement? No. I never run in a partisan election before. When?

PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU SEEK LABOR'S ENDORSEMENT:

My platform is 1) education, 2) employment, 3) affordable housing, 4) public safety, and 5) sustainable smart growth. I believe that labor shares those values and that I would be a great advocate for the issues and concerns of workers and families in the District of Columbia.

SIGNATURE:  DATE: 05/08/2018

Please return your signed questionnaire by Wednesday, May 9, 2018 to the below address:
Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO
Attn.: David Dzidzienyo
815 16th St NW, Washington, DC, 20006
Submissions can also be e-mail to ddzidzienyo@dclabor.org

2018 Candidate Questionnaire

A. Workplace Rights: (Please answer by checking the box)

There are certain basic workplace rights that the unions and members of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO believe are fundamental and absolutely essential. Collective bargaining elections and representation are permitted for private sector employees, whereas for public sector employees in Maryland, legislation is required in order to have those same rights. Over the past decade, these rights have been given to many states, higher education and K-12 public school education employees and some county employees. However, thousands of public sector employees are still denied these rights.

1. Would you support comprehensive collective bargaining legislation that would provide collective bargaining rights (including exclusivity, binding arbitration and an independent labor board) for all public employees-local, county, school boards and state?

Support

Oppose

Not sure

What is your position on each of these fundamental rights?

2. The right of workers to organize and have union representation

Support

Oppose

Not sure

3. The right to freely exercise workplace rights free from harassment, intimidation and/or delays

Support

Oppose

Not sure

4. The right to bargain collectively with a legal obligation on both sides to negotiate in good faith

Support

Oppose

Not sure

5. The right to resolve differences in a fair, impartial and timely manner, including binding arbitration

Support

Oppose

Not sure

The National Labor Relations Act grants private sector workers the right to organize themselves and be represented by a union in collective bargaining negotiations. From time to time, opponents of collective bargaining propose legislation to curtail workers' bargaining strength and effectiveness. Under the innocuous sounding name of "Right-to-Work," this legislation purports to protect the rights of workers and improve the state's economic development climate. But the net result in Right-to Work states is that workers earn less, have fewer health care benefits and have higher job fatality rates. Right to Work laws prohibit workers from negotiating a "union shop" or "union security" clause in their contracts. Such a clause obligates those in the bargaining unit to pay their fair share of the collective bargaining representation costs. By wiping out that protection, Right to Work actually weakens the rights of working people.

6. Would you support Right to Work in DC?

Yes

No

Not sure

Opponents of the labor movement have tried in recent years to stifle labor's political and legislative voice through a friendly sounding proposal called "paycheck protection." It proposes to give rank and file members more control over how their dues money is spent. It does so by requiring unions to spend an incalculable amount of time and money jumping through bureaucratic hoops. The net effect is that it would make it virtually impossible for unions to represent their members in the political and legislative arenas.

7. What is your position on the so-called paycheck protection idea?

Support

Oppose

Not sure

When workers choose an exclusive collective bargaining representative, that union is legally obligated to represent every worker in the unit. Even when some people choose to be non-members, the union must represent them fully and fairly. In other words, those who pay dues are obligated to subsidize those who don't.

8. In your opinion, should a union be permitted to collect a service fee from non-members for the cost of union representation as long as there are protections for those who object on religious grounds?

Yes

No

not sure

9. Please provide us with at least two examples of what you have done legislatively to support workers' rights?

I have never sought or held any legislative office prior to now. I can say that I have always supported action through our Advisory Neighborhood Commission that is consistent with my values of supporting working families and protecting the voiceless. An example is the Gas Powered Leaf Blower Resolution that I drafted and shepherded through ANC5E which supports legislation pending before the D.C. Council to phase out gas powered leaf blowers by 2022. One of the basis I cite in that resolution is that the toxins emitted by gas powered leaf blowers have the greatest impact on workers who are largely immigrants working to earn a living without the protection of organized labor.

B: Workforce Violence:

1. What is your position on work place violence in the Hospital and Health care facilities?

I believe that the management of health care facilities should be held accountable for instances of work place violence. The victims of work place violence should have the right to sue such facilities for monetary damages and I believe that treble damages should be a part of the formula for compensation. Also, in the most egregious of circumstances, managers should be held criminally liable and face possible incarceration if they willfully disregard or are recklessly negligent in failing to exercise due diligence when there is evidence that work place violence is taking place within their facilities.

2. How do you see yourself as an elected leader championing this issue for workers?

I would introduce legislation to put into place the remedies described above.

C: Health Care: (Please answer by checking the box)

1. Nurses and other health care workers are often required to perform manual lifting of patients, without support offered by additional personnel, equipment, or training. As a result, registered nurses experience high rates of musculoskeletal disorders and injuries from lifting patients. Such injuries can have long-term detrimental effects on workers' ability to perform daily tasks, leaving them with chronic debilitating pain and often forcing them to leave the workforce. Indeed, about 12 percent of the nursing workforce leaves the bedside each year due to back injuries.

Do you support legislation that would require every healthcare employer to implement a comprehensive, evidence-based safe patient handling program that includes the use of lift teams, patient handling equipment, and proper training for healthcare workers?

Yes.

2. Health disparities, including those resulting in deaths, in the District of Columbia between black and white residents and between those in different wards are severe. Do you believe these disparities are a serious problem?

Yes

No

other (explain below)

If so, what policies are you proposing to eliminate these disparities?

We should open adequately staffed health care facilities or satellite locations in all wards of the city. We should also include robust health care education in all of our schools, age appropriately designed, of course, from elementary school through high school. And we should work to eliminate food deserts by incentivizing the location of healthy food outlets in all wards as well.

Will you highlight these problems in your election campaign?

Yes

No

other (explain below)

3. Currently 28 million Americans, including at least 26,000 people in the District of Columbia, have no health insurance. Although the District government moved to expand Medicaid to cover an additional 35,000 people and has created an insurance exchange pursuant to the federal Affordable Care Act, it is the case now and will

continue to be true that many people with health insurance cannot afford to use it due to high premiums, high deductibles and high co-pays. Nurses are concerned about the impact on access to health services resulting from limited networks of providers, and high out-of-pocket costs. Health insurance companies have reported record stock price increases, and hospitals anticipate increased revenues as well.

Furthermore, the subsidies promised under the Affordable Care Act may not be available because of federal budget constraints, and in any case will be insufficient for many Americans with low and moderate incomes. And the DC government contracts with private insurance companies to administer the District's Medicaid program, while some states administer their Medicaid insurance program in-house at approximately half the cost.

4. Will you support a "patient bill of rights" to ensure health care access and limit out-of-pocket costs for receiving care outside of insurance company-established networks?

Yes

No

Other (explain below)

5. Do you support prohibiting "balance billing" of patients by healthcare providers who seek reimbursement beyond what insurers pay?

Yes

No

Other (explain below)

6. Do you support "in-sourcing" DC's Medicaid program so that private insurance corporations aren't allowed to profit off this vital public program?

Yes

No

Other (explain below)

7. Are you in favor of a publicly administered, state-based, single-payer universal health care system and, if so, what steps are you prepared to take to make it a reality in the District of Columbia?

Yes **No** **Other (explain below)**

I would support enabling legislation to make this happen.

D: Education:

1. What steps will you take to promote public unionism in DC if, as is expected, the Supreme Court will rule against unions in *Janus vs. AFSCME*?

I would consider public subsidies to make union membership less expensive and more attractive to employees who might decide to opt out for cost reasons.

2. Do you believe that the students of Washington, DC would be better served if the District ended Mayoral control of schools and educational policies were once again the purview of an elected School Board?

Yes **No** **other (explain below)**

This is actually the position I have articulated in some depth in the first of the 14 videos currently being posted on my website which can be found at www.bradleythomas4dc.com.

3. Do you believe the Washington Teachers' Union and DCPS should have the right to collectively bargain on teacher evaluation standards and procedures? If so, what steps will you take to achieve this goal?

Yes **No** **other (explain below)**

4. DCPS has one of the highest teacher turn-over rates in the nation. What would you do to address this problem?

I would encourage the new elected school board, once in authority over the public schools, to move toward greater teacher collaboration and away from testing and Impact evaluation. Teacher need to feel that their efforts are appreciated and their ideas are valued. D.C. public school teachers are not leaving for higher pay, they are leaving for more autonomy and respect. We can fix that without increasing the cost burden on taxpayers.

5. How are you going to help guarantee transparency in the DCPS budgeting process to make sure that funds earmarked for Title I programs and at-risk programs are used as intended?

Again, I would turn authority over to an elected school board, let that board hire a professional superintendent and hold that superintendent accountable for budgeting and expenditures.

6. The achievement gap in DC between low income students and their more affluent peers is 38 times the national average.

- What do you believe are the causes of the achievement gap?

Economic disparity and economic segregation are the causes. The District of Columbia has probably the widest income disparity of any place in the country and increasingly, due to real estate values, the very wealthy and the very poor live in vastly different communities separate by many miles and in some cases, a wide and busy freeway that seems more like an uncrossable river than a highway.

- What will you do to address this problem?

We need to focus on affordable housing and not just in certain areas. All parts of the city should have a mix of housing that allows for people of different economic stratas to actually live in close proximity to each other and for their children to go to school in truly diverse classrooms. I would also favor the development of more economic empowerment zones where tax and other incentives are provided to encourage clean, smart growth industries to locate in traditionally impoverished neighborhoods thus creating jobs and spurring sustainable economic development. As economic disparity decreases, so will the achievement gap.

7. The DCMR Title 5 states that principals and assistant principals serve one year without tenure in the position. Retention and reappointment shall be at the discretion of the Chancellor. Principals and Assistant Principals have no due process rights resulting in a high turnover of school administrators. How would you propose building continuity of leadership in the face of this situation?

I would again propose returning authority over the school system to an elected board and a professional superintendent. I would establish a process whereby all school employees, including administrators, have the right to appeal unfavorable personnel decisions that affect them.

E: Accountability/Economic Development: (Please answer by checking the box)

Short-term rental companies like, Airbnb, have grown exponentially in the last few years. In order to protect our neighborhoods and communities from commercial operators who convert valuable housing into de facto hotels, Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie introduced Metropolitan Washington Council: AFL-CIO 2018 District of Columbia - Primary Election Candidate Questionnaire

the *Short-term Rental Regulation and Affordable Housing Protection Act of 2017*. This bill will 1) limit short-term rentals to primary residences, 2) remove the incentive to operate commercially by putting a cap on the amount of days a host can rent their home while not present, and 3) hold hosting platforms accountable.

1. Will you vote in support of this bill?

Yes No

I believe the bill as it is written goes too far and restricts the right of homeowners to make decisions about their own homes that work to their benefit. I believe that the bill, again, as it is written, benefits large commercial hotel enterprises at the expense of homeowners. Reasonable restrictions can be placed to prevent the abuse that the bill claims to be directed at but I believe such abusers are the exception. They should be stopped but not in a manner that punishes the retired couple who is only trying to supplement their retirement and cover their mounting medical expenses.

2. Late last year, a Council committee held a hearing on noise complaints. It was evident from this hearing that the vast majority of the complaints should be addressed through better enforcement of the existing Noise Control Act. Unfortunately, some have proposed solving their noise concerns with draconian legislation that would limit the exercise of free speech in the District. Do you promise to defend the Noise Control Act, which provides critical protections for residents and visitors seeking to exercise their free speech rights in the District of Columbia?

Yes No

3. Would you be willing to support DC legislation that would require any and all presenters, promoters, vendors, "Events DC", et al doing any form of for-profit theatrical presentation, show or concert on City property or on property controlled by the City to pay all of their employees an area-standard wage, provide health care coverage and access to job training in the Technical Entertainment Industry?

Yes No

4. Congress extended the Abolishment Act (D.C. Code §§ 1-624.08 et seq.), effectively allowing the DC government to define the procedures governing any RIF initiated by an agency head, by limiting the procedures to which an aggrieved employee is entitled, and rendering those procedures nonnegotiable. Although this was a misguided effort to help DC government reduce costs, agency heads exploited this Act, often using it as a means to rid their agencies of unpopular employees.

5. The use of such improperly targeted RIF's is an abuse of authority and does not serve the interests of the District. DC workers covered by a collective bargaining agreement have been unfairly deprived of any meaningful opportunity to assert the rights that they were intended to have under the District of Columbia Comprehensive Merit Personnel Act.

Will you support legislation to repeal provisions of the Abolishment Act that override collective bargaining agreements?

Yes No

6. Should DC government be able to override collective bargaining agreement provisions regarding RIFs?

Yes No

The Comprehensive Merit Personnel Act of 1974 (CMPA) establishes the right of DC government employees to form unions if they so desire, and sets out how representation elections will be held, how collective bargaining will be conducted, and how disputes will be resolved.

7. Some ES employees (paraprofessionals) work only 10 months out of 12. Would you support legislation to allow these workers to receive unemployment services during the summer months when they are deemed as officially being laid off employees?

Yes No

I believe they should be compensated for 12 months but be able to elect to receive their salary over the 10 months that they are actually working. If that is the case, then I would not support legislation to allow them to receive unemployment compensation over the summer months. If, however, they are being compensated for the 10 months that they work and are deemed to be not employed and therefore not paid over the summer, then they should be eligible for unemployment services in the summer.

8. Will you vote to uphold the provisions of the CMPA if they are challenged in any way which reduces workers' rights?

Yes No

Noncompliance with wage and worker protection laws persists at a high level around the country. A 2008 survey found that 68% of people working low-wage jobs in large cities experience wage theft every week, losing about 15% of their earnings. When our laws regarding the minimum wage, overtime, wage theft, and paid sick leave are violated, workers and their families face real and dire consequences. They suffer increased poverty rates and are more likely to rely on public assistance, straining safety net programs and hindering workers' ability to improve their economic futures. But the harms of wage theft also extend

beyond its immediate victims, reducing taxable income and exerting downward pressure on the wages of all workers in affected industries. Law-abiding business owners are also harmed as their competitors unlawfully trim labor costs*.

9. What steps will you take toward eliminating all forms of wage theft and fostering an environment of worker protections throughout the District of Columbia?

Wage theft goes undetected because of the fear of its victims to blow the whistle. I would support strengthening whistle blower legislation with increased damages and possible criminal penalties for those who penalize whistleblowers.

While wage theft is pervasive and highly damaging, there is some good news: the problem is not unassailable. To be most effective, anti-wage theft laws must be meaningfully and effectively enforced, and must be accompanied by other legal provisions that empower victims to speak up against their abuse, such as strong anti-retaliation laws.

10. Will you work with community groups, city administration and others to support proven programs that combat wage theft: Community engagement in language access programs; Public Education Partnerships; the Development of Community Allies to assist with third party enforcement?

Yes **No**

11. Will you increase funding in the departments and programs that have proven to ensure that workers are paid correctly and made aware of their rights under the law, such as: increased funding in DOES for investigators, funding for community members who are third party enforcers; increased penalties for employers who violate the laws and; funding for a robust Public Awareness and Accountability Program?

Yes **No**

12. Will you provide the funding to implement the Procurement Integrity, Transparency, and Accountability Amendment Act of 2016, which requires that city contracts above \$75 million have a Project-Labor Agreement?

Yes **No** **other (explain below)**

13. Income and racial inequality are growing in DC. What would you do to address that?

See my answer to question number 6, above.

F: Transportation: (Please provide your response on a separate sheet).

1. Do you believe that any privatization of public transit is acceptable for the improvement of service at WMATA, DC Streetcar or DC Circulator? If so, please explain.

Yes No other (explain below)

No. I am old enough to remember D.C. Transit, the privately owned system owned and operated by Mr. O. Roy Chalk. As I recall, that system was less reliable than Metro so I don't see the evidence that privatization will result in improvement of service.

2. In the 2018 legislative session in Maryland, ATU Local 689 aggressively pursued legislation to see assaults on transit workers charged as an automatic felony. Will you work to make sure D.C. joins Maryland in raising the penalty of assaults on transit employees?

Yes No

I give this question a qualified yes. Increasing the range of penalties I fully support but I'm not sure about this automatic felony stipulation. As a former criminal defense attorney, I am very wary of laws that take away the discretion of judges and prosecutors to pursue justice. The three strikes and you're out laws, the mandatory minimum sentencing laws, all resulted in the tripling of our prison population but didn't make us any safer as a society. Many assaults are a direct result of mental illness. I think we should be careful about any criminal statutes that use the work "automatic".

1. CLASS I / Freight & Passenger Railroad – Safety & Security

Union Station is the second busiest station in the national Amtrak network with five million annual passengers. MARC, and Virginia Railroad Express (VRE) transport daily 50,000 commuters and visitors to the District of Columbia. The combined ridership for Amtrak, MARC, and VRE is expected to increase from 14 million – 34 million by 2040.

Freight railroad traffic through the District of Columbia is projected to increase by 57% to 48 daily double-stacked freight trains from the Ports of Norfolk, Charleston, Jacksonville, and Miami.

Wards 4,5,6,7 host the railroad corridors with a combined population of 297,747 residents equaling forty-four (44%) percent of the total population. Our 700,000 population is projected to increase by 30% by 2040. Many of these new residents will live and work in the old and new communities adjacent to railroad corridors.

The past two years the District of Columbia has experienced major railroad incidents:

- May 2016 - 170 car CSX train freight train derailed in Ward 5 traveling through the District of Columbia on the CSX Capital Sub-Division from Cumberland, Maryland to Hamlet, North Carolina. Fourteen cars derailed with seven tanker cars containing sodium hydroxide, ethanol, and calcium chloride leaking its contents.
- June 2017 – Two CSX Transportation employees were struck and killed by a southbound Amtrak Train No. 175 north of Union Station in the Ivy City.

In 2017, the Council approved the Rail Safety and Security Amendment Act (D.C. Law 21-254) authorizing the creation of an Emergency Response and Rail Safety Division within the Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE). It also would establish of a Railroad Advisory Board.

2. In FY 2018 budget, the Council did not appropriate any funding to establish the State Rail Safety Office. Would you support full funding to establish the Rail Safety Office in the FY 2019 budget?

Yes

No

other (explain below)

3. Would you support an amendment to D.C. Law 21-254 “Rail Safety and Security Amendment Act” authorizing the DOEE to assess penalties and fines for safety or security violations on the railroads operating in the District of Columbia?

Yes

No

other (explain below)

G. Utility Issues: (Please provide your response on a separate sheet)

I. DC Water – Clean River Impervious Area Charge (CRIAC) Fee

Over past 30 years, the Metropolitan Washington Council / AFL-CIO has opposed policies that denied reasonable, fair, and equitable utility rates to District of Columbia residents.

It is our view the (Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charge) CRIAC being imposed on ratepayers by DC Water is of these policies. The CRIAC is onerous and undermines public

support for Clean River Projects to improve storm water management and the Anacostia River.

More importantly, the CRIAC fee disproportionately affects senior citizens, working families, and long-term homeowners. It is also contributing to accelerated gentrification and the de-stabilization of many legacy neighborhoods and communities.

The CRIAC fee is making the District of Columbia unaffordable for its many public servants and residents. DC Water must develop a plan to broaden its rate base, to include assessments on the District of Columbia and Federal Governments.

The Metropolitan Washington Council Labor Council is committed to reducing the financial burden of the CRIAC charges and a more equitable formula to fund restoration and preservation of the Anacostia River.

If elected to the Council of the District of Columbia, will you commit to:

14. Do you support efforts to reduce and expand the distribution of CRIAC charges across rate groups?

Yes

No

other (explain below)

15. Do you support greater oversight of DC Water operations and ratemaking? Including requiring Council approvals for all new fees, charges and rate hikes imposed on District of Columbia ratepayers.

Yes

No

other (explain below)

H. Retail/Budget

1. Do you support Fair Scheduling legislation to require employers to give retail and restaurant workers their weekly work schedules at least two weeks in advance, and requires employers to offer part-time workers more hours when a fellow employee leaves, rather than hiring additional employees?

Yes

No

other (explain below)

2. What are your top three priorities for the DC budget?

- 1) Improving the public school system, 2) Creating empowerment zones and enforcing the First Source Law to increase employment, particularly in the less affluent parts of the city, and 3) strengthening and enforcement of the Inclusionary Zoning law to create more affordable housing so that working people can afford to remain in the District of Columbia.

Candidate (Please Print Legibly): Bradley A. Thomas

Signature: 

Date: May 8, 2018

Thank you.