



# **Metropolitan Washington Council AFL-CIO**

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

### **CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Interviews will be conducted as a panel. Each candidate will give a 1 minute (please stick to this) opening statement, followed by questions from the interview committee. Questions may or may not be based on the questionnaire you filled out. Each candidate will then have an opportunity for a 2 minute closing statement.

Interview Schedule:

Friday, May 11, 2018 at 1:05am:

Ward 1 Councilmember of the District of Columbia Candidates:

- **Panel 1 - 1:55pm – 2:40pm**
- **Welcome and Introductions from the District of Columbia COPE Chair**

- **Committee on Political Education (COPE) Chair, (2mins)**
- **Opening Remarks- 1min each candidate**
- **Q & A – 30 mins**
- **Closing remarks – 2min each candidate**
- **Discussion and vote on candidates for recommendation of endorsement**

**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;
  - Ward 1 has a recent baby boom
  - Can’t leave behind out vulnerable families
- 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.
- the largest union currently in the AFL-CIO is the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), with approximately 1.4 million members

**Metropolitan Washington Council AFL-CIO**  
**2018 CANDIDATE'S QUESTIONNAIRE**

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Name: Sheika Nikole A. Reid

Address: 1203 Columbia Rd NW

City: Washington, DC

Zip: 20009

Phone Mobile: 202-320-3897 Email sheika.reid@reid4ward1.com

Candidate for: Ward 1 DC Council

Campaign Committee Name and Address: Reid for Ward 1 - 2018  
3421 14th St NW, Washington, DC 20010

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Campaign Committee Phone: 202-320-3897 Email / Web info@reid4ward1.com

Campaign Manager: Spencer GoPaul

Campaign Treasurer: Anthony Miller

Does your campaign accept PAC contributions? Yes

Have you ever received labor's endorsement? AFSCME When? 2018 Primay Election

**PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU SEEK LABOR'S ENDORSEMENT:**

I will answer this question with a favorite quote:

“The Labor movement is a force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

I have understood the value and power of collective bargaining since my time as a student at Howard University where I worked with the cafeteria workers to unionize and demand

dignified working conditions. I look forward to continuing my advocacy on behalf of working men and women.

SIGNATURE: Sheika Nikole A. Reid (e-signature) DATE: 5/9\_\_\_\_\_

**Please return your signed questionnaire by Wednesday, May 9, 2018 to the below address:**

**Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO**

**Attn.: David Dzidzienyo**

**815 16<sup>th</sup> St NW, Washington, DC, 20006**

**Submissions can also be e-mail to [ddzidzienyo@dclabor.org](mailto: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    X                      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    X                      Oppose                      Not sure**

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

**Support    X                      Oppose                      Not sure**

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

**Support    X                      Oppose                      Not sure**

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

**Support**    **X**                      **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**    **X**                      **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**    **X**                      **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** **X**                      **No**                      **not sure**

- Yes a union should 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. Non-union members that pay a service fee will receive minimal

representation and services from the Union with funding limitations. Non-union members that refuse to pay service fees will receive the fewest amount of representation legally allowed by the union.

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

**B: Workforce Violence:**

1. What is your position on workplace violence in the Hospital and Health care facilities?
  - Workplace violence is a critical issue. I support a more stringent approach to addressing workplace violence in the District of Columbia.
2. How do you see yourself as an elected leader championing this issue for workers?
  - I will advocate for a more stringent approach through letter writing, talking to other political officials, and increasing public awareness of workplace violence. I will also work with labor leaders in developing viable solutions

**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?

A comprehensive strategy is required to meaningfully address health disparities in the District. Among other efforts, I will pursue policies that invest in making sure low-income residents have access to the health care services they need and that the care provided by the companies the city pays to provide care is of high quality. I will also advocate for sustainable funding for DC's public health insurance programs. I will work with my colleagues on the Council and unions to ensure that policy that speaks to medical care for workers meets the needs of the workforce.

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  X  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  X  No  Other (explain below)

**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 am committed to the preservation of workers’ rights and, if elected, I will push for legislation aimed at protecting union membership in the District of Columbia.

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  X  No  other (explain below)



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**                      **X**                      **No**                      **other (explain below)**

- If elected, I will be an advocate for teachers, as represented through the Washington Teachers' Union, to be integrally involved in the development of teacher evaluation standards and procedures. I will engage with the Washington Teachers' Union and DCPS leadership to reassess our teacher evaluation standards and procedures. When the collective bargaining agreement is up for negotiation next year I will advocate for both the Washington Teachers' Union and DCPS leadership to be at the table when development and implementation decisions are being made regarding teacher evaluation standards and procedures.

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

The high rate of teacher turnover is a serious problem for DC Public schools, particularly in schools located in low-income communities. It is a multi-faceted problem, however, one of the first things I will do as a Councilmember is to push for policies that invest in and provide resources for induction programs that include mentorship of new teachers by more seasoned teachers and professional development that prepares them to navigate challenges with management and behavioral issues in the classroom. I will also advocate for smaller classrooms and additional classroom resources and supports for our teachers. Additionally, that will provide housing support through subsidies and expanding EHAP and other home purchasing programs.

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?

If elected, I will vigorously exercise the powers of oversight to help propel transparency and accountability in the DCPS budgeting process. There is already a great deal of frustration surrounding the lack of transparency and accountability. I will advocate for increased engagement with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, school administrators, and the WTU over the course of the school and fiscal year to make sure that funds earmarked for Title I programs and at-risk programs are being used as intended.

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?

Understanding the causes of the achievement gaps and how to correct those causes is a very complex issue. The causes are many, including socio-economic factors, home and community factors, over-reliance on standardized testing, disruptive student behavior, classroom size, educator attitudes, beliefs and values.

- 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?**

A first step would be to end one year appointments.

**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 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  Yes  No

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  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    **X**                       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    **X**                       No

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

Yes                       No    **X**

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    **X**                       No

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

Yes    **X**                       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?
- a. As Councilmember, I will work with the Office of Attorney General Karl Racine to make sure that charges are brought any and all employers who are found guilty of wage theft by the Department of Employment Services. Additionally, I will advocate for sufficient funding for the Attorney General's office to provide the legal might required to hold culprits accountable.

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    **X**                       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    **X**                       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**                      **X**                      **No**                      **other (explain below)**

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

- One of the main reasons why I am running for this seat on the Council is to address the issues of income and racial inequality. One of my priorities will be to strengthen the First Source agreement so that it applies to contracts of all sizes. Additionally, restructuring the First Source Agreement to prioritize the hiring of long-time DC residents.
- The District of Columbia is also in dire need of more job-training and work-force development options. Through advocating for the expansion of Career Technical and Vocational programs in schools, we can ensure that more DC residents graduate from high school with the skills to earn a living wage.

**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 **X**            other (explain below)

Privatization of public transit has been a trend for the last 10 years in the District. Privatization for the improvement of service at WMATA, DC Streetcar or DC Circulator will lead to ridership decreasing due to the increase in travel costs, further adding to the exorbitant cost of living for most District residents who are already severely economically challenged. It is short term thinking that leads to the loss of public assets.

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            **X**                       No

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**                    **X**                    **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**                    **X**                    **No**                    **other (explain below)**

**H. Retail/Budget**

- 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)**                     

- What are your top three priorities for the DC budget?
  1. Affordable Housing
  2. Education
  3. Workforce Development / Jobs

Candidate (Please Print Legibly): Sheika Nikole A. Reid

Signature: Sheika Nikole A. Reid (e-signature)

Date: 5/9

Thank you.