

Metropolitan Washington Council

2016 DC Election Candidate Questionnaire

The Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO, which represents 180 local unions in all industry sectors, including the public and federal sectors, has priorities which include

- 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
- ensuring that a worker's universal right to organize and to bargain collectively for wages, hours and conditions of work are maintained and enforced

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Candidate Full Name:	Robert White
Office Seeking:	DC Council
Ward or At-Large:	At-Large
Office:	
	Democrat <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Republican <input type="checkbox"/>
	Statehood/Green <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
Campaign Address:	808 Madison Street NW, Washington, DC 20011
Candidate Contact Information:	202-306-2876
Treasurer Name and Address:	
Name	Khalid Pitts
Street Address	808 Madison Street
City	Washington
State	DC
Zip Code	20011
Accepts PAC Contributions	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Restrictions on PAC Contribution	No
Previous Elected/Appointed Office:	
	NA
	Click here to enter text.
	Click here to enter text.
	Click here to enter text.
	Click here to enter text.
Terms of Previous Office:	
	NA
	Click here to enter text.
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Have you ever received the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO endorsement?

Yes No

When:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Have you ever assisted a Labor organization to achieve any of its goals?

Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Many members of my family have been Union – grandparents, father, wife among them – and their struggles are my struggles. Throughout my professional experience with Congresswoman Norton and with Attorney General Racine, I have taken the cause of Labor seriously and worked with Labor in little ways and big ways. I have worked to get PLAs on federal projects, helped create the first ever Labor Council in the Office of the Attorney General and began the effort to enforce wage theft from the Attorney General’s Office. If elected, I will be your champion – and not only in election years like the incumbent.

Please explain why you seek labor’s endorsement?

I believe that we share the same values when it comes to working families like yours and mine. We are losing a middle class in this country and working families are over the edge. I want to work with you as you represent many of these people, and these are the people who need need new leadership and representation that has at its aim doing something, not running to be someone. I believe I represent working families more than any other candidate in this race.

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Washington National and Dulles airports are an important source of employment for people in our communities. But instead of helping our communities move ahead, the low wages and poor conditions for food and retail workers at these airports are keeping workers behind. At Dulles, the estimated average wage for retail and food service workers is just \$9.74 per hour yet for every hour worked by a concessions employee at the airport, the government makes an estimated \$14. Major airports across the country have taken great strides in giving retail and food service workers a better deal by working with UNITE HERE. We believe that airport concessions workers in our nation’s capital deserve the same. D.C. appoints several members to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority which governs these airports.

1)		What would you do to ensure that airport food and retail workers would be paid fair wages and benefits?
		Answer A
		First, I would suggest and support only those appointments that are sympathetic to the needs of working people and commit to leveling the playing field for workers.
		Answer B
		Second, I would help the workers and Labor to mount a campaign to communicate the necessity of these workers interests – why better pay and benefits matter – to the media, other decision-makers, and the general public. In for a penny, in for a pound.

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ny studies have shown that good patient outcomes and short hospital stays require adequate numbers of registered professional nurses at the bedside. When there are fewer RN’s to care for more and increasingly ill patients, complications multiply and expensive hospital stays are increased.

2)		Do you support the Safe Working Conditions for Healthcare Workers Amendment Act of 2015, also known as the Patient Protection Act, introduced by Chairman Phil Mendelson and four other members of the District Council (and passed 4-1 by the Committee on Business, Regulatory and Consumer Affairs) that would impose mandatory, minimum nurse-to-patient ratios in DC hospitals?
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

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More and more companies are springing up offering visitors to the City options other than registered businesses such as hotels and bed and breakfast inns, such as stays in people's homes and apartments in residential neighborhoods. This causes noise, parking problems, and loss of tax revenue.

3)		Do you support stronger enforcement of our zoning laws, which are designed to protect our neighborhoods and affordable housing from the unchecked growth of short-term rentals?
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

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kinds of festivals, concerts, promotions occur on city property or on property controlled by the City and some of these vendors exploit the workforce used to operate these events, paying lowest wages tolerated, providing no healthcare, offering no job training to enhance the skill set, and treating these workers as "1099 independent contractors", thereby avoiding Social Security and payroll taxes. This situation also disadvantages the "brick and mortar" permanent facilities providing arts and entertainment in our city.

4)		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 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

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The Davis-Bacon Act of 1931 requires the payment of local prevailing wages for the construction of DC government public works projects, such as public schools, fire and police stations, and roads and bridges. Relying on a narrow definition of public works that is currently the subject of a court challenge, the District requires some government-assisted development projects to pay construction workers the local Davis Bacon wages, but not others. For example, development projects receiving Tax Increment Financing from the District are required to pay their construction workers local prevailing wages, but projects receiving property and other types of tax abatements, using the District’s industrial revenue bond program, or leasing or purchasing District-owned land are not required to pay local prevailing wages.

5)		<p>As a DC Councilmember, will you introduce and support legislation to require the payment of Davis Bacon wages by construction contractors and subcontractors working on ALL projects receiving property and other tax abatements, involving the sale or lease of District-owned land, or participating in the revenue bond program?</p>
		<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

6)		<p>What 2-3 things would you do to close the large and growing achievement gaps in our public schools? What would you do to ensure that all students and their schools have a healthy physical environment, quality teachers, instructional supplies and other resources they need to be successful?</p>
		<p>Answer A</p>
		<p>I think the conversation about education spends so much time fighting over test scores that we miss the obvious. The most troubled and at risk children are in school for 8 hours a day but at home or on the streets for 16 hours a day. Yet we expect teachers, administrators, and staff to solve bigger problems than division in math and learning to write an essay. If that’s all our kids faced, then I know all of our educators would be up to the task. But that is not what they face. Our educators face hungry children who do not have enough to eat; children with parents who can’t make ends meet on three part-time jobs at minimum wage but work round the clock but cant help with school work; and the list goes on and on: incarceration, health-problems, unhealthy living conditions, etc. Let’s address the</p>

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		real problems of what happens 16 hours a day, not just what is happening in the school building.
		Answer B
		<p>Here is my five point solution on education;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provide wrap-around services to children and parents in and around the school; 2) Open and use closed off school facilities – with separate entrances and access for security and safety – for other family support services; 3) Find additional monies to support additional healthy meal programs for students AND parents who require it; 4) See that job training problems and better job skills development is redefined as family issues and education issues – we want more parents working in better paying, long-term *career* jobs that creates stability in the homes and gives kids the structure to schieve in schools; 5) Work with schools of every stripe – public, charter, private, Catholic/religious, etc – to see how we can get more accomplished and set individualized plans. If that means we go school to school, value the input of adminisitrators, teachers, staff, parents, and the kids themselves, so be it. <p>*I'm a little tired of the burden of schools and all-or-nothing test scores being hung over teachers and administrators like a punishment waiting to happen.</p>

7)		The collective bargaining agreement covering DC teachers expired 3 years ago. The effect of this is to deny collective bargaining rights to those who democratically voted to join a union. What is the role of the City Council in ensuring that contract negotiations are not intentionally stalled by labor or by management? How would you ensure that the voice of workers is heard and encourage a broader, productive, and a more healthy labor/management relationship?
		The way that your voice is heard – in an election or a non-election year – is to elect me. In my last race, I had the support of many members of the Council and again this year, I receive the attention and guidance of many who would like to see me join them. I can make the best parts of the Council better, and I pledge to do my part to carry a much heavier load than the current incumbent. If what you have gotten so far is the best of incumbency, I think you've been hoodwinked.
		Click here to enter text.
		I am very well liked by leaders across the community, and as you know from my general demeanor, I can get along with anyone and commonly do. The incumbent doesn't even work well with members of his own committee, much less people across the city. I'm the one candidate in this race who can draw votes and draw people together from end of DC to the other.
8A)		MetroAccess is a share-ride, door-to-door, paratransit service in the region for the most vulnerable transit passengers (the elderly and those with disabilities that can't take traditional transit). Do you support the allocation of additional funding to paratransit that will allow the companies to provide pay and benefits equivalent to their WMATA
		Click here to enter text.

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		bus operator counterparts?
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

8B)		Additionally, would you support the crafting of legislation that would set standards that would ensure that paratransit operators are not required to accept money outside of their vans and set schedules that would ensure that riders do not have to be transported for hours before they are dropped off?
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

9)		In 2014, at least 170 Metrobus operators reported being assaulted and in 2015, there were even more incidents, including a station manager being stabbed and a bus operator who was caught in gun crossfire. Would you be willing to work with labor to craft legislation that would ensure the consistent enforcement of the law to protect transit operators who are assaulted on the job and protect them from excessive discipline when they are assaulted?
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

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. 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.

10)		Will you support legislation to repeal provisions of the Abolishment Act that override collective bargaining agreements?
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		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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11)		Should DC government be able to override collective bargaining agreement provisions regarding RIFs?
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

In October 2015, the DC City Council passed emergency legislation creating a pilot program to address the “crisis” in the management of Emergency Medical Services. The emergency legislation created a two-tiered strategy of EMS calls: Basic Firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) would respond to all EMS calls. Patients with low priority medical conditions would be required to wait for a private ambulance to transport them to a hospital. If a private ambulance does not arrive in 10 minutes, the patients would then be required to wait for a fully staffed EMS medic unit to arrive.

The EMS stakeholders consists of many unique and well-trained committed individuals who have a vested interest in the well-being of the District of Columbia residents who depend on emergency services. They are committed to delivering quality care, providing safe transport, and ensuring that DC residents receive continuous care before and during their transport to the appropriate facility.

12)		In your opinion, are important government services such as emergency medical transport better served by strengthening DC workers who provide those services or by privatization?
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep work in house
		<input type="checkbox"/> Privatize

13)		Would you be willing to introduce or support legislation that would mandate annual safety testing by an approved and recognized entity of all Fire and EMS equipment and apparatus?
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

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.

14)		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
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		summer months when they are deemed as officially being laid off employees?
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

15)		Will you vote to uphold the provisions of the CMPA if they are challenged in any way which reduces workers' rights?
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

16)		If elected, what would you publicly do to ensure guaranteed healthcare for all is a right and not a privilege?
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

17)		In a City where the cost of living is incredibly high, do you support raising the minimum wage in the District of Columbia to \$15 an hour?
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

18)		Rent control has helped maintain affordable housing in DC. Do you support making rent control permanent in our City?
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Although the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively for their wages, hours and working conditions is a right recognized in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, and although federal labor law protects this right, employers routinely fire, harass, demote and otherwise punish workers who try to form a union. In order to help protect a workers' right to unionize, would you be willing to:

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19)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Urge employers to respect their employees' right to form a union by remaining neutral during a union organizing campaign?
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Write a letter to unorganized workers endorsing an organizing drive by a labor union?
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Write a letter to urge an employer to re-hire a worker fired because he/she supported the union during an organizing drive?
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Urge the public to utilize union produced products (the labor federation can provide lists)?
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Walk a picket line in support of a labor union?
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)

20) For the measures above that you have agreed to support, would you be willing to:

- Co-sponsor legislation
- Work with our lobbyists to pass the bill
- Testify at a hearing in support of legislation
- Speak at public events in support of legislation
- Write a letter in support of legislation
- Other (please specify)

21)		There are companies with bad labor relations records (i.e. not paying their employees prevailing wages, retaliating against employees for organizing activities, or failing to pay fair wages etc.) that still receive DC government contracts. Will you support policies barring these companies from receiving government contracts or any government assistance?
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

22)		Do you support allowing teachers who teach in DC public charter schools to join a union if they so choose so they can have the same rights to bargain for wages, benefits, and working conditions as other public, federal and private sector workers do?
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

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23)		<p>There are independent DC government agencies such as the Public Service Commission, The Office of the Tenant Advocate, Office of the People's Counsel, the Public Employee Relations Board, and University of the District of Columbia Board of Trustees, and others that must function without political interference. The Mayor appoints the heads of these independent agencies and members of these Boards with the confirmation of the City Council. Boards can be stymied and stopped if timely replacements of those whose terms expire are not made by the Mayor; leaving the board without a quorum means no work can be done by the commissions. Will you support legislation that will allow the heads of these independent agencies and members of these independent boards to continue to serve past their terms until they are replaced by someone who is appointed and qualified?</p>
		<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

24)		<p>Justice delayed is justice denied. Likewise pay and benefit improvements denied is not justice. Once a collective bargaining contract has been reached between a union representing public employees and the City, do you pledge to fully fund those contracts and require the Mayor to send the contract to the City Council for approval within 30 days after the contract has been ratified by the union members?</p>
		<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

25)		<p>Freedom of speech and the right to protest are fundamental American rights honored above all others. Will you oppose any attempt to limit these freedoms, especially by workers who must protest to protect their livelihoods and their rights?</p>
		<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

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tudy released in June 2015 found that the majority of people who work in retail and food service in the District receive their work schedule less than one week in advance and are scheduled for fewer hours than they would like to work.

26)		<p>Do you support bill B21-512, the "Hours and Scheduling Stability Act of 2015" -- introduced and sponsored by 8 Councilmembers -- that would ensure chain retail and food establishments offer available work hours to qualified current employees and post employee schedules three weeks in advance?</p>
		<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

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The role of the central labor council is to organize in the community to promote social justice for all working People.

27 A)		What do you believe are the 3 most important issues facing working people in the District, and how will you make an impact on those issues if elected to this office? Please include both short-term and long-term specifics.
		Short Term Answer
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Job Training – The incumbent, Vincent Orange, has dropped the ball on oversight of the job training programs. He claims great things as Chair of his Committee, but his gross negligence could cost TENS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS in job training funds that working people need. A new minimum wage of \$15 an hour is a good partial answer, and so many people support it that its not a question, yet he takes credit. The question is how to get more of our residents out of hourly, fast-food jobs and into career jobs – like the trades and long-term needs like nursing and teaching, not to mention programming and app development. So step 1 is removing Orange. He doesn't get it. 2) Incentives – I would stop wasting incentives on companies that are too big to trust, like Wal-Mart. I would start growing local companies and require mentoring programs.

Before signing this document, verify that the content you are signing is correct.

Candidate Signature **Robert White**

Candidate Title Candidate (?)

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Date

April 5, 2016

27 B)		Long Term Answer
		<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Education – I described in an earlier question about how I think we need to re-envision education and look at what happens to students and families when kids aren't in school.2) Transportation – Job training is a good start to improving the lives of working people, and the second step is making sure that all of our residents have a chance to get to where the jobs are reasonably. I support the addition of new busing configurations, bus-only lanes, and feeder buses to new housing, work and retail corridors, such as Kennedy Street.3) Affordable Housing – We need to invite new developers who want to build affordable housing into the District (My #3 short-term answer is transparency, but the form ran out of space.). Many developers have told me that they feel like its an insider game in the District, and they need to pay an insider to get through the process. I will change that. I also will enforce existing requirements on new developments instead of waiving them as a standard. I also commit to funding the upkeep of the existing stock of affordable housing. And I will support the rezoning of under-utilized industrial and commercial corridors for aff. Housing.