

Metropolitan Washington Council

2016 DC Election Candidate Questionnaire

Leon T. Andrews, Jr. Responses

Candidate Full Name: Leon T. Andrews, Jr.

Office Seeking: Councilmember – Council of the District of Columbia

Ward or At-Large: Ward 4

Office: Democrat

Campaign Address: 617 Kennedy Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

Candidate Contact Information: 202-847-0595

Treasurer Name and Address: Ernest Williams, III

Street Address: 617 Kennedy Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011

Accepts PAC Contributions: Yes

Restrictions on PAC Contribution: \$500

Previous Elected/Appointed Office: N/A

Have you ever received the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO endorsement?: No

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

If yes, please explain:

Throughout my life, I've been either a member of a union (GEO 3550 - Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO) at the University of Michigan while working on Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Planning) or worked with unions and governments to assist members.

While in Pittsburgh working on my Master of Science in Public Policy & Management, I worked for YouthBuild to help young men and women learn the construction trade. As a number of these young people struggled to gain admittance to the local union, I was tasked with creating a pathway for them to realize their desires to join Laborers Local 373.

With the help of local union leadership, we created a for-profit construction entity and worked with the local government to identify development opportunities. Our efforts to advocate on behalf of these young people created a better negotiating position with the local union and offered better opportunities for many of the young people to enter the union.

Please explain why you seek labor's endorsement:

The labor endorsement is very important to me. The unions represent hard-working men and women, and our city does not function without labor. Members of the unions ensure our kids get to school on time, that we are safe and secure, and are able to enjoy our city by going to a baseball game. They champion workers' rights. As the next councilmember for Ward 4, I seek to be a strong advocate for what the union stands for and provide our residents with a representative that will fight tirelessly on their behalf.

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- 1) What would you do to ensure that National and Dulles airport food and retail workers are paid fair wages and benefits?
 - a. As an active consumer of services and goods from Reagan National and Dulles airports, I would ensure airport food and retail workers are paid fair wages and benefits by supporting DC's appointees to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and provide them the strength of my seat on the DC Council to organize and fight for living wages and quality benefits.
 - b. If need be, I would draft or co-sponsor legislation that stated any resident of DC employed by a Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority vendor be compensated with a living wage and provided quality benefits for them and their families. Additionally, I would work with my counterparts in the Virginia and Maryland legislatures to see similar language introduced and hopefully passed.
- 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?
 - a. Yes, I support the Patient Protection Act, in its current form, as I believe registered nurses are vital components of quality healthcare and the nurse-to-patient ratio is critical to guaranteeing patient safety. Additionally, I support encouraging our youth in DC to seek out the nursing industry as a career option as the compensation, education and opportunities are extraordinary and the respect generated by these individuals can change a life, forever.
- 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?
 - a. Yes, I support stronger enforcement of our zoning laws, but we must also examine the DC Code and DC Municipal Regulations to ensure our regulations are relevant to today's ever-changing technological environment.

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- 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?
- a. Yes, I would support legislation mandating entities using City property to pay a living wage, provide health care coverage and ensure employees or sub-contractors have access to DC Government sponsored job training or continuing education programs. We must support the theatrical industry, to include providing DC Government services to their employees, some of whom may not be residents, but as long as the company is incorporated and registered in DC, we have an obligation to support our small businesses and local entrepreneurs.
- 5) As a DC Councilmember, will you introduce and support legislation to require the payment of Davis Bacon wages by construction contractors and sub-contractors 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?
- a. I support, in its current form, B21-0566 - Living Wages for Publicly Supported Jobs Amendment Act of 2016. This legislation closes a major loophole for developers and provides a living wage for ALL employees working on District supported projects.
- 6) 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?
- a. Promote reading proficiency by the end of third grade;
 - b. Recruit mentors to help, particularly our students of color, stay on track in school;
 - c. Push for in-school alternatives to suspension and expulsion;
 - d. Work to reduce chronic absence and truancy;
 - e. Develop alternative pathways to high school completion, including investing in vocational education and trade schools;
 - f. Ensure that students receive at least two healthy meals every school day and during the summer months when school is not in session;
 - g. Prioritize placing qualified teachers in places of need;
 - h. Parent engagement and family supports to ensure they are empowered to be their child's first teacher and most important advocate;
 - i. Connect families with the diverse supports they need for a safe, healthy and economically secure household; and
 - j. Invest in creative funding strategies to allow communities to provide more comprehensive and collaborative system of support for children and families.
- 7) The collective bargaining agreement covering DC teachers expired three 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?

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- a. The role of a Councilmember is to ensure DC residents have a strong voice that can supplement their efforts, whether they are employees or owners, in this case teachers. My 10+ years of experience with the National League of Cities provides me with an extremely high level of labor negotiation expertise that no other candidate in the Ward 4 race can claim.
 - b. I support quarterly engagement by labor and management to ensure old and new issues are corrected in a timely manner and not used during contract negotiations, thus providing a positive negotiation environment.
- 8) 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 bus operator counterparts?
- a. Paratransit van service is provided by three contractors with the goal of generating a profit on their WMATA contract. I support changing the language in future contracts to state, the contractor of choice must compensate its drivers, through pay and benefits, an amount equivalent or greater than WMATA bus operators. I would follow that change with a review of the Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure the DC representatives are prepared, organized and engaged with the DC senior and disability community to ensure they fully understand the needs of the most vulnerable transit passengers.
- 8) 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?
- b. As a third generation Washingtonian, raised by my mother and grandmother, I understand the challenges associated with transportation and household economics – I support providing SmartTrip cards to MetroAccess ridership to ensure a safe transaction is conducted and, more importantly, riders are able to better budget as cash is taken out of the equation.

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- 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?
- I support providing every protection possible to those serving in the public's interest. As a director with the National League of Cities, I've seen cities across the US go above and beyond to ensure their employees are protected when they defend themselves against locally born terrorists. Whether its providing counsel, paid leave or a career change, we must use innovative methods to show our unequivocal support of public employees.
- 10) Will you support legislation to repeal provisions of the Abolishment Act that override collective bargaining agreements?
- While I support collective bargaining and the rights of workers to organize, I would need to review the existing language, as well as the proposed changes to ensure we are providing real protections and not band-aids to a larger problem.
- 11) Should DC government be able to override collective bargaining agreement provisions regarding RIFs?
- The DC Government should not be able to override collective bargaining agreements. They should petition to open a signed agreement, and then come back to the table and renegotiate, just as any other party would if they had an issue within a signed agreement.
- 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?
- When properly incentivized, companies with profit goals are able to provide important government services for the public. In the case of low priority EMS calls, a significant bonus or penalty should be attached to the 10-minute arrival time of the dispatched private ambulance. If data shows that DC Fire and EMS is unable to handle the amount of calls, we must utilize public-private partnerships to ensure DC residents have access to dependable emergency services.
- 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?
- This legislation should already be included in the DC Municipal Regulations. As a newly elected Councilmember, I would make this one of my highest legislative priorities.
- 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 summer months when they are deemed as officially being laid off employees?
- I would recommend the DC Department of Human Resources consider ES employees the same way they designate teachers within the DC Public Schools. The ten months they do work should be spread across 12 months of pay periods, thus ensuring these employees have year-round income.
- 15) Will you vote to uphold the provisions of the CMPA if they are challenged in any way, which reduces workers' rights?

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- a. I believe in workers' rights, and any legislative body, inside or outside of DC that infringes upon the Comprehensive Merit Personnel Act of 1974 will be met with the strongest opposition from my office and its supporting network.

16) If elected, what would you publicly do to ensure guaranteed healthcare for all is a right and not a privilege?

- a. If elected, I would work closely with the DC Health Benefit Exchange to ensure they are marketing healthcare to all residents without bias. We all desire healthcare, but some believe the task of acquiring insurance is arduous, so as a government, we must work to ensure those thoughts remain in the 20th century and tirelessly work to provide a seamless process.

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?

- a. It is widely known that to live in DC you must earn a prevailing or living wage. I support implementing a pilot program that increases the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. If as a government our findings support a minimum wage of \$15 per hour, I would support its full implementation through comprehensive legislation.

18) Rent control has helped maintain affordable housing in DC. Do you support making rent control permanent in our City?

- a. I believe the current rent control regulations must be stringently enforced by the DC Government, to include the DC Attorney General and DC Inspector General, and legislation needs to be passed to close the door on exploitative landlords and greedy developers that desire to displace seniors, people with disabilities and low-income tenants.

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19)

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

20)

X	Co-sponsor legislation
X	Work with our lobbyists to pass the bill
X	Testify at a hearing in support of legislation
X	Speak at public events in support of legislation
X	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?

- a. The District of Columbia is by all intense purposes, a \$14B corporation and the DC Council is its Board of Directors – my board member experience on national organizations uniquely qualifies me to understand and manage a multi-billion dollar budget and, part of that oversight is ensuring we do not conduct business with corporate scofflaws. I fully support imposing contracting restrictions on companies that participate in wage theft, retaliation or any other behavior that is not consistent with DC's commitment to providing an open and fair employment environment.

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- 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?
- As public servants, they deserve to be represented by unions if they so choose. And as long as DC Public Charter schools receive funding from the DC Government, I will outwardly support these teachers and their rights to bargain for wages, benefits and improved working conditions.
- 23) 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?
- As a commissioner on the DC Commission on African American Affairs, I fully understand the need for boards and commissions and when seats go unfilled, this only hurts the public. I support allowing members of independent agencies and boards to serve past their terms until qualified replacements are identified. Our city is filled with talented residents seeking to volunteer and share their experiences – it is up to the DC Government to tap that talent and fill the vacant seats in a timely manner.
- 24) 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?
- My experience working with mayors and unions at the National League of Cities has proven to me that sitting on approved contracts is not in the public's interest. With the support of the Metropolitan Washington Council, I pledge to work with the Mayor and DC Council to ensure collective bargaining agreements are placed on the Council agenda in a timely manner, which in this case, will be within 30 days after the ratified contract has been received by the Mayor.
- 25) 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?
- My support of worker's exercising their First Amendment rights is unwavering, as long as it is peaceful and respectful.
- 26) 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?

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- a. I fully support the Hours and Scheduling Stability Act of 2015. This type of legislation is written to protect both employees and employers alike. We must continue to put family first when we make attempts to close loopholes and provide increased benefits to the work environment.

27) 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.

- a. Paid Family and Medical Leave

- i. As a father to three girls, I fully understand the benefits of paid family and medical leave. As a family, we made the choice to have a paycheck and to care for one another on a daily basis, but there are too many families in the District that are living paycheck to paycheck and must make the difficult decision of a paycheck or caring for their family and this is unacceptable when change can happen.

While the language within the Universal Paid Leave Act of 2015 establishes a universal paid leave system for all District residents, the DC Council has been unable to agree on its fiscal impact. Thus in its current state, it does not appear it will move to the Committee of the Whole for a vote, but will instead be re-introduced with new language. I do support the concept, but not with a negative fiscal impact.

As the next Ward 4 Councilmember, I would work with my colleagues and other community organization, to draft fiscally sound language that would be acceptable to DC residents, the Executive Office of the Mayor, the DC Council and Congress.

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b. Housing People can Afford

- i. We must have a dedicated fund for affordable housing that is deposited, at the beginning of the fiscal year, through collected non-dedicated sales tax revenue.

In 2006, the DC Council passed legislation, without sunset, that directed the Chief Financial Officer to begin depositing the first \$100 million of non-dedicated sales tax revenue collected annually into the Public School Capital Improvement Fund, which was meant to modernize our public schools. Should DC continue with its revenue growth, I would recommend the Council pass language that directs the second \$100 million of non-dedicated tax revenue to affordable housing construction and programming to secure that population for years to come.

Just as the city placed a moratorium on liquor licenses across Ward 2 because of the proliferation of restaurants in neighborhoods, we must look to innovative methods to ensure affordable housing remains in every ward and neighborhood across DC.

c. Educational Pathways to Better Careers

- i. At a time when roughly 40% of DC students leave high school without a diploma, we need to put more emphasis on dropout prevention and recovery through multiple pathways to graduation, including: alternative high schools; credit recovery programs; flexible diploma and GED programs linked to job training; dual enrollment options; and other programs that offer wraparound services and connect classroom instruction with career and college readiness.

While these pathways may also involve reengaging students in traditional high schools, we need to work with DC Public Schools to expand the number of alternative high schools available to students who struggle in traditional high school settings. Hallmarks of these alternative schools include a rigorous and relevant curriculum, project-based learning, close student-teacher relationships, youth voice and leadership development.

As the next Ward 4 Councilmember, I will work to connect students in alternative high schools with supportive wraparound services provided by city agencies and community organizations. At the same time, I will forge better connections with postsecondary institutions and businesses to expand college and career options.

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

Candidate Signature:

Candidate Title: Leon T. Andrews, Jr. – Candidate, Ward 4, Council of the District of Columbia

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