

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:	Trayon White
Office Seeking:	Ward 8 City Council
Ward or At-Large:	Ward 8
Office:	
	Democrat <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Republican <input type="checkbox"/>
	Statehood/Green <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
Campaign Address:	3127-D Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE
Candidate Contact Information:	Phone #: 202-239-9439 or 202-316-7593 Email: trayonwhite8@gmail.com Website: TrayonWhitefor8.Nationbuilder.com
Treasurer Name and Address:	
Name	Nicole Spriggs
Street Address	3127-D Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE
City	Washington
State	DC
Zip Code	20032
Accepts PAC Contributions	Yes
Restrictions on PAC Contribution	Limited to those who share our views.
Previous Elected/Appointed Office:	
	Ward 8 Board of Education

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Terms of Previous Office:

Special election term 2011

General election 2012.

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**Have you ever received the
Metropolitan Washington Council,
AFL-CIO endorsement?**

No

When:

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

No

If yes, please explain:

Click here to enter text.

**Please explain why you seek labor's
endorsement?**

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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	<p>What would you do to ensure that National and Dulles airport food and retail workers are paid fair wages and benefits?</p>
	<p>Answer A</p>
	<p>As with any union’s efforts, I will do my part to help Local 23 win recognition to bargain for every possible worker and then negotiate good contracts for the workers. On my part, I will speak at rallies, join picket lines, write letters to the editor and op ed pieces, and use my social networks to promote Local 23’s cause.</p>
	<p>Answer B</p>
	<p>It is a shame that the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority directors allows contractors and concessionaires to treat workers poorly. I will ask DC’s representative on the MWAA board to press their colleagues to require that MWAA contractors and concessionaires commit to signing Labor Peace Agreements and, at a minimum, agree to compensate at the level of federal prevailing wages (Davis-Bacon rates).</p>

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Many 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	<p>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?</p>
	<p>Yes. In addition, I support mandatory minimum staff-patient ratios for Certified Nursing Assistants, Licensed Practical Nurses and other health care workers.</p>

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	<p>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?</p>
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		<p>Yes. I am in support of enforcing zoning laws. Also I am concerned about the intrusion of AirBnB and similar companies because they do not have the safety and quality controls of registered businesses. Furthermore, it is difficult to assure that the unregistered businesses treat their workers fairly.</p>
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Many 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		<p>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?</p>
		<p>Yes. I will also work to ensure that the DC Government has adequate resources to inspect and enforce requirements that vendors treat their actual employees as W-2 employees and not pretend that they are 1099 contractors.</p>

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,

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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. I also favor requiring Davis Bacon wages for utility work performed by such companies as Pepco, Washington Gas and Verizon.</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>

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I stand with the Washington Teachers Union in working to enhance our public schools. My specific proposals:

Offer more incentives and resources for youth summer enrichment programs similar to Upward Bound and support both vocational and soft skill training. By using the summer months to provide robust job training, practical work experience, and educational and career guidance, students and young people will be better prepared to enter a new school year. This commitment to year-round education will allow continuous growth and consistency in education.

Propose a simplified way for small nonprofit organizations to work with youth through the public school system. These partnerships will ensure that youth receive diverse opportunities, mentoring, support, access to before and after school programs and intervention when needed. By strengthening the support system around our youth we can guarantee an increase in educational and career attainment.

Provide incentives and support for Ward 8 residents of all ages to further their education. By partnering with the University of the District of Columbia and other local universities, we will expand opportunities for Ward 8 residents to further their desires for the personal and professional rewards of achieving higher levels of education.

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7	<p>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?</p>
	Answer A
	<p>This Mayor has had well over a year to conclude negotiations with the Washington Teachers Union. I suspect intentional stalling.</p> <p>The DC Council has oversight responsibilities, including oversight of the Executive’s negotiations with the WTU. In exercising my oversight responsibilities, I will determine if the Executive has been bargaining in good faith.</p>
	Answer B
	<p>If I determine that there are genuine differences between the Union and the Executive, I will do what I can to help resolve those differences, including private conversations as well as public statements.</p> <p>If I determine that the Executive has not bargained in good faith, then I will challenge the Executive’s actions and I will take part in (or, if need be, lead) actions to persuade Mayor Bowser to act in good faith.</p> <p>The quality of our children’s education is at stake. No one should tolerate any Mayor’s failure to bargain in good faith.</p>

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8	<p>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?</p>
	<p>Yes.</p> <p>You get what you pay for. Inferior pay and benefits has led to MetroAccess service that falls far short of the quality of WMATA's.</p> <p>I support comparable pay and benefits for MetroAccess workers, so that management and the public are justified in holding MetroAccess workers to the same high standards that WMATA's workers meet.</p>

8	<p>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?</p>
	<p>Yes. These two proposals are reasonable; and the help to ensure the safety of the paratransit operators and the well being of the riders.</p> <p>WAMATA should require these standards now. If they do not do so, I will take part in (or, if need be, lead) informal and legislative steps to set these standards.</p>

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9	<p>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?</p>
	<p>Yes. I am familiar with such threats to the safety of transit operators. I am keenly aware of these threats, because many of the incidents have occurred in Ward 8 and on bus lines that service my Ward.</p> <p>Of course, law enforcement must protect transit workers; and WMATA should take all possible steps to assure worker (and rider) safety. Furthermore, blaming the victim (that is the transit workers) when they are assaulted is absurd.</p> <p>I am happy to support with the transit workers union in crafting and fighting for passage of legislation to address these issues. Furthermore, I commit to fighting for solutions outside the formal legislative process.</p>

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.

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1	<p>Will you support legislation to repeal provisions of the Abolishment Act that override collective bargaining agreements?</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes. I will urge the Congress to repeal these provisions of the Abolishment Act, because of the merits of that action.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Furthermore, I will fight Congressional interference in this area as well as in any other local matter that should be under the control of DC residents and <i>their</i> elected leaders. Yes, we can and should lobby, cajole and even sue the Congress to let DC residents and their leaders have control over local issues.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">However, the ultimate way to guarantee local control is Statehood for the people of DC. I am committed to fight for Statehood, and I look forward to joining with the Metropolitan Council in winning this fight.</p>

1	<p>Should DC government be able to override collective bargaining agreement provisions regarding RIFs?</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">No. Bargaining over RIFs, particularly bargaining over the impact and implementation of RIFs, must be a union right. I am happy to work with the Metropolitan Washington Council in passing DC Council legislation that will repair the damage that the federal Abolishment Act provisions has caused.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I am also willing to join the Washington Metropolitan Council in pursuing other legislative strategies to assure treatment with respect to RIFs. For example, I am willing to establish legally binding procedures that enable unions to protect worker rights during a RIF. I would prefer to see such procedures come out of the collective bargaining process; but, if Congress prohibits</p>

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		<p>that approach, then we should establish local law that lets unions protect DC Government workers.</p>
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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.

1		<p>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?</p>
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		<p style="text-align: center;">Keep this vital service in house!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I am always suspect of contracting out government services. Private companies that win such services typically seek to maximize profits by cutting worker compensation. “You get what you pay for.” Cuts in worker compensation reduce morale and, over time, erode the quality of the workforce.</p>

1		<p>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?</p>
		<p>Yes. I am dismayed that the Department of Fire and Emergency Management Services does not already utilize such testing. To protect the safety of FEMS workers and to protect the public, I will be glad to introduce or co-introduce legislation requiring this testing,</p>

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.

1		<p>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?</p>
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		Yes. Fairness demands allowing these workers access to unemployment services and benefits.
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1		Will you vote to uphold the provisions of the CMPA if they are challenged in any way which reduces workers' rights?
		Yes. I will always stand with the workers.

1		If elected, what would you publicly do to ensure guaranteed healthcare for all is a right and not a privilege?
		Yes. Passage of the federal Affordable Care Act has made great strides in assuring the human right of quality health care. However, some DC residents fall through the safety net that the ACA tries to provide; in these cases, the DC Government must act to assure quality health care for every resident.

1		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. I support the DC15 ballot Initiative. Furthermore, if for some reason that Initiative is not on the November 2016 ballot, I will introduce comparable legislation in the first month that I take office as the Ward 8 Councilmember.

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1		Rent control has helped maintain affordable housing in DC. Do you support making rent control permanent in our City?
		Yes. I will fight to enhance DC's rent control legislation — particularly by closing loopholes in the legislation and by limiting landlords to only reasonable (not absurdly high) returns on their investments.

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:

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

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	Y	Walk a picket line in support of a labor union?
	Y	In addition, will press for legislation that requires Project Labor Agreements and Labor Peace Agreements whenever the DC Government provides funds, land, tax breaks or zoning relief. These agreements, I know, make it easier for workers to organize and, thus, help to ensure fair worker compensation and high quality returns for DC Government investments.

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

Y

Co-sponsor legislation

Y

Work with our lobbyists to pass the bill

Y

Testify at a hearing in support of legislation

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Y

Speak at public events in support of legislation

Y

Write a letter in support of legislation

In addition, I commit to regularly meeting with Metro Council leaders to identify additional areas where DC Council action is needed.

2	<p>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?</p>
	<p>Yes. A company's past performance should always be a factor in evaluating that company's bid on future work; and I will introduce or co-introduce legislation that requires that a company's labor relations record be considered when a DC Government agency assesses a bidder's past performance. Companies with the best labor records should win awards over bidders with less stellar records.</p> <p>Furthermore, I will introduce or co-introduce legislation that bans awards to companies with the worst labor records.</p>

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2	<p>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?</p>
	<p>Yes. It is my understanding the federal law prohibits organizing the teachers in DC public charter schools. I will join or lead efforts to overturn this Congressional interference in what should be a local government decision.</p> <p>May I point out that once again we see a situation where our lack of Statehood has made it possible for the Congress to act against the best interest of the people who live in DC.</p>

2	<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. This arrangement already exists and proves successful in some agencies and boards. I will introduce or co-introduce legislation that extends these arrangements to all independent agencies and boards.</p>

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2		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?
		Yes. Particularly since it takes so long to negotiate a contract, I commit to speedy and full funding of contracts once union members ratify them.

2		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?
		Yes. Of course, yes.

A study 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.

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2		<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. In Ward 8, many people are unable to take or keep good paying jobs because chaotic work schedules keep them from meeting personal and family obligations such as child care. Advance notice of schedule changes will make it easier for workers to meet their other obligations and still keep their jobs.</p>

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

2		<p>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.</p>
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		<p>In my answer to Question 6, I have already addressed one of my priorities: education.</p> <p>Two other issues of great concern to me are employment and housing.</p> <p>Even though many workers in DC thrive, joblessness (particularly among young men of color) is a national scandal. My short term employment solution is simply to put people to work in any way we can. This includes paying a subsidy to organizations that hire additional people — specifically DC residents who need work experience in order to improve their ability to compete in the job market.</p> <p>With respect to housing my short term solution would be to help people remain in their homes. Sometimes a short-term financial crisis prevents a family from being able to pay their rent. If the family becomes homeless as a result of this crisis, it might cost the DC Government tens of thousands of dollars to help the family until they can find another permanent home. Temporary government assistance (to help the family can pay rent in their current home), would avert the trauma of eviction and would save the DC Government money it would otherwise spend to support a homeless family.</p>

2		Long Term Answer
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In addition to the long term education solutions I discussed in Question 6, I propose long-term solutions for employment and housing.

With respect to employment, the long term solution is to prepare people to compete in DC's vibrant economy. Every year, thousands of people come to DC taking jobs that might have gone to current DC residents. To compete for these jobs, many current DC residents need the Government's help.

One example of such help would be opportunities to participate in apprenticeship programs. Here I refer to high quality programs such as the one operated by the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA). Government help cover costs of associated with providing the required work and training hours.

Furthermore, where people lack education and skills needed to enter apprenticeships, the Government should provide DC residents of any age with opportunities to acquire the needed education and skills.

With respect to housing, the ultimate long-term solution would be to enable DC residents to earn enough money so they could afford to pay for high-quality at market rates.

However, some residents might never be able to compete for housing at today's sky-high market rates. To assist these individuals, we need a comprehensive approach that includes

- constructing housing affordable to people at all income levels;
- strengthening current rent control laws;
- increasing the dollar amounts available through the Home Purchase Assistance Program (HPAP) and making it easier for people to qualify for HPAP;

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• allowing for greater density and additional zoning relief when developers provide for additional affordable housing, and• requiring construction of additional housing, affordable at all income levels, in any projects that involve DC Government's land.
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Candidate Title [Click here to enter text.](#)

Date [Click here to enter text.](#)