



**Metropolitan Washington Council
AFL-CIO**

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

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Overview:

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

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

Metropolitan Washington Council AFL-CIO
2018 CANDIDATE'S QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Name Rustin Lewis, DPA

Address 3317 Gainesville St., SE

City / County Washington, DC Zip 20020

Phone: 202-329-5849 Mobile _____ Email info@voteRustin.com

Candidate for: (I) At-Large Council

Campaign Committee Name and Address: Friends for Rustin Lewis and 3317 Gainesville St., SE

Campaign Committee Phone: 202-680-4363 Email / Web
info@voterustin.com/ www.voterustin.com

Campaign Manager: (Acting)Thomas Houston

Campaign Treasurer: Sheldon King

Does your campaign accept PAC contributions? Yes

Previously elected / appointed office:

Office NA Term _____ Office _____ Term _____

Have you ever received labor's endorsement? No When? _____

PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU SEEK LABOR'S ENDORSEMENT: I am seeking Labor's endorsement because I support unions and a workers' right to receive equity in the workplace. I firmly believe in the unions efforts to protect employees, especially in situations of workplace injustices. Your endorsement will highlight a candidate who has worked on the frontlines and dedicated his professional and academic career to empowering youth and families by building pipelines to education and workforce development opportunities. I will link arm in arm with the union to make decisions that are in the interest of improving education, encouraging a robust workforce and equitable workplace.

SIGNATURE: Rustin Lewis DATE: 9/8/18

**Please return your signed questionnaire by Saturday, September 8, 2018 to the below address:
Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO**

Attn.: David Dzidzienyo
815 16th St NW, Washington, DC, 20006
Submissions can also be e-mail to ddzidzienyo@dclabor.org

2018 Candidate Questionnaire

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

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

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

Support **Oppose** **Not sure**

What is your position on each of these fundamental rights?

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

Support **Oppose** **Not sure**

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

Support **Oppose** **Not sure**

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

Support **Oppose** **Not sure**

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

Support **Oppose** **Not sure**

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

6. Would you support Right to Work in DC?

Yes

No

Not sure

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

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

Support

Oppose

Not sure

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

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

Yes

No

not sure

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

My advocacy for workers and workers' rights comes in the form of my efforts to prepare a generation of young people (who are now in their 30's) for a transition from high school into college and subsequently the workforce. In addition, I prepared and placed adults in job-

readiness and workforce development programs, aided them in securing employment and stackable credits such as HVAC and Copper Cable training. These programs contributed to their employment and the ability to sustainably provide for their families.

B: Workforce Violence:

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

Studies show that physical and verbal abuse happen to 20% and 50% of employees respectively in hospital and health care facilities. This is significantly higher in specialty facilities. This causes higher rates of workplace stress, leave, and high churn levels. This causes low morale in the employees that remain and a high strain on the financial resources of the city. My position is that we must hold management accountable for ensuring that hospital and health care facility employees are safe, and if the violence is initiative by a patience, that the patient immediately obtains the mental health support that they need and deserve. I would meet with groups such as but not limited to DC Labor and National Nurses Association to gain more perspective and input on how to establish innovative solutions.

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

I would propose legislation that makes violence prevention training mandatory as on-boarding and a bi-annual certification. I would also work with DBH and my council peers to ensure that the budget reflected personnel levels that would allow for safe rounds. Finally, I would review the Health Care Workplace Violence Prevention Act and pursue its implementation if it made sense for the District.

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

No

other (explain below)

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?

I am aware of the efforts of Council to build a new hospital facility on the East end of the city. My platform focuses on the equity in DC. Therefore, I view healthcare through a lens of equity that makes certain that every resident has a fair and just opportunity to be healthy. I propose enactment of legislation that will close the gap by... (a) Ensuring the recruitment and hiring of top tiered experienced staff with an expertise in the health occurrences that reflect the community being served; (b) Increasing funding for early detection programs and (c) Promoting access to healthcare through telemedicine.

Additionally, the Affordable Care Act works best for a hospital network. In areas of the District with little to no service, I would propose legislation that creates a network between the hospital, emergency care centers, and home care. I would work to add worker protections in the policy to guarantee protection of the employees of these add-on services. This would provide equitable, closer, and cheaper to residents who need it most.

Will you highlight these problems in your election campaign?

Yes

No

other (explain below)

My campaign is grounded in the ideology that equity is imperative for all DC residents, and to ensure inclusiveness as the District is developing.

3. Currently 28 million Americans, including at least 26,000 people in the District of Columbia, have no health insurance. Although the District government moved to expand Medicaid to cover an additional 35,000 people and has created an insurance exchange pursuant to the federal Affordable Care Act, it is the case now and will continue to be true that many people with health insurance cannot afford to use it due to high premiums, high deductibles and high co-pays. Nurses are concerned about the impact on access to health services resulting from limited networks of providers, and high out-of-pocket costs. Health insurance companies have reported record stock price increases, and hospitals anticipate increased revenues as well.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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*?

The Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that public sector unions do not have a constitution right to be able to force employees to pay dues. I disagree with this ruling and would promote public unionism by working with colleagues to protect the rights workers and by passing laws that make it easier for unions to recruit members, even if they cannot collect fees. In California, for example, unions now have the right to meet with new public employees as they start working. Another law keeps private phone numbers and email addresses of employees of

public agencies, so that anti-union groups will have a harder time convincing them to drop out of unions.

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

Yes

No

other (explain below)

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

Yes

No

other (explain below)

My career and education are grounded in the field of education. My experience has shown me that for DCPS to have a comprehensive, and just, evaluation system District educators need to be included in its development. Collective bargaining would ensure that this happens. First, I would work with the Council's Education Committee and Deputy Mayor of Education to understand what has been put in place from the City's perspective. Next, I will work with WTU to understand their desires and frustrations. Finally, I would work to develop a set of policies that deliver on the following benchmarks:

- Ensuring student learning opportunities focus on skills and knowledge but also competencies not currently assessed under large-scale testing
- Ensure there is an educator taskforce made up of high-performing and low-performing educators to give input on any new evaluation system

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

To address the high turnover rates, I would propose that we (a) decouple teacher evaluations from student test scores; (b) assess our classroom sizes and explore building additions when necessary, (c) provide training and professional development opportunities that lead to advancement and salary increases and (d) hire additional teachers and re-assess the teacher-student ratios. Additionally, I want to make sure that teacher's contracts offer fair salaries, and that there is adequate money in the budget to pay for school supplies, library books, teacher's aides and nurses and anything else that will lead to student success.

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?

I advocate for independent auditors to conduct spot-checks periodically. The budget will be managed via a trackable online system that ensures easy access, oversight, transparency and random spot check access for an independent auditor. I am also committed to ensuring that these funds for Title 1, special education, ELL and At-Risk are supplemental and do not supplant existing resources.

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?

The achievement gap is impacted by equity. Equity is grounded in the premise of directing more resources to the students who need it the most, rather than ensuring that all students have the same resources. Inequities across the city include housing, compensation, safety, and racism. All of these factors affect education. One of the age-old arguments is that schools in high-income areas draw more resources from their tax base and initiatives like PTAs. DC is a bit more complicated given the charter school system, which is intended to provide better options for parents. Often students don't get into their first-choice schools, and charters are not required to keep students enrolled if they become "too difficult" (i.e., low test scores, discipline problems, IEPs) which perpetuates inequity and fosters the achievement gap.

- What will you do to address this problem?

To address this problem, I believe that we have to leveling the playing field by initiating policies and prioritizing funding for vocational programs, apprenticeships, mentoring, tutoring, and the use of technology-based learning. These programs help to alter educational leaning patterns, which manifests itself by creating a more productive workforce that is in the vanguard of ensuring economic and social triumph. In addition, students today are visual learners, and we must update and standardize an approach that reflects how young people interact today.

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

I propose fostering continuity by encouraging the WTU, Chancellor, Deputy Mayor of Education and School Board to partner on making common goal and common sense recommendations. This approach incites collaboration while leveraging expertise.

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

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

Yes

No

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

Yes

No

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

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

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

Yes

No

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

Yes

No

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

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

Yes

No

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

Yes

No

Noncompliance with wage and worker protection laws persists at a high level around the country. A 2008 survey found that 68% of people working low-wage jobs in large cities experience wage theft every week, losing about 15% of their earnings. When our laws regarding the minimum wage, overtime, wage theft, and paid sick leave are violated, workers and their families face real and dire consequences. They suffer increased poverty rates and are more likely to rely on public assistance, straining safety net programs and hindering workers' ability to improve their economic futures. But the harms of wage theft also extend beyond its immediate victims, reducing taxable income and exerting downward pressure on the wages of all workers in affected industries. Law-abiding business owners are also harmed as their competitors unlawfully trim labor costs*.

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

While the US Supreme Court recently made it harder to bring collective action lawsuits to stop wage theft, I would propose working with the Department of Employment Services to

support the enforcement of laws that are already law, increase penalties and close gaping loopholes between legislation and practice. My initial research of other states addressing this issue, such as Ohio, have shown that increased penalties are not, by themselves, sufficient to deter noncompliance with minimum wage laws. Enforcement of the policy is equally as critical.

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

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

Yes

No

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

Yes

No

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

Yes

No

Other (explain below)

I support a requirement that city contracts have a Project-Labor Agreement, however I want to further research the prescribed dollar amount of \$75,000. It may be in the best interest of DC residents to lower the contracted amount to ensure broader-inclusivity.

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

I would address the growing income and inequities in DC by introducing legislation that funds education and workforce development programs that are sustainable over time. Education and workforce preparation are substantial equalizers. Education inequity is also a huge driver of racial inequality. I will work to create a budget and policies that do not solely focus on Title I dollars as the source of funds to increase performance in high poverty schools. In addition, I would fund programs that...

- look at tax incentives for businesses that encourage continued learning for employees and provide loans based on the ability to pay versus a credit score
- ensure equity in pay, and
- support oversight of employment protection regulations

I would also work to approve a budget that shifted funds from large projects (like the Streetcar) to create living wage jobs across the District.

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 X No other (explain below)

I believe that service should be performed by the Union and remain under government regulation and control.

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?

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

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

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

H. Retail/Service

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

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

2. What is your position on Initiative 77 and the efforts to repeal it?

My position on Initiative 77 is shaped by the numerous waiters, waitresses, and bar maids whom I asked for their position. I am confident that I received authentic and honest feedback. I am running for Council to be a voice for the residents of DC. Therefore, I oppose the Initiative on these grounds. However, I strongly do not agree with any efforts to repeal the law, because I believe that by doing so, we devalue the votes of citizens who voted, and disrespect the process.

Candidate (Please Print Legibly): Rustin M. Lewis, DPA

Signature: Rustin Lewis (submitted electronically by Rustin Lewis)

Date: 9/8/2018

Thank you.