



**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
- 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 Ed Lazere

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Candidate for: DC Council Chair

Campaign Committee Name and Address: Ed Lazere for DC Chair

3045 Q Street, SE 20020

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Campaign Manager: Mat Hanson

Campaign Treasurer: Kendrick Curry

Does your campaign accept PAC contributions? No

Previously elected / appointed office: **none**

Office Term Office Term

Have you ever received labor's endorsement? NA When?

PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU SEEK LABOR'S ENDORSEMENT: I've spent 20 years fighting for working DC families as head of the DC Fiscal Policy Institute. I've partnered with labor to create a living wage, raise the minimum wage, require all DC employers to provide paid sick days, create paid family & medical leave, increase unemployment insurance benefits, promote high-road development that requires good job with benefits in DC development deals, push for enforcement of labor laws, and more. I am ready to move forward on legislation that will help workers (Fair Scheduling, Patient Protection, Short-term Rental Regulation), while my opponent has slow-walked recent bills and called for a moratorium on new bills to help workers. An endorsement from labor would show DC residents that I not only have been a leader fighting for working families in the past but also that I am the best candidate to represent the interests of hard-working DC families who struggle to afford to live in DC face pressures every day from unfair and uncaring corporate labor practices.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Please return your signed questionnaire by Wednesday, May 9, 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?

- I have advocated that all development deals subsidized by the District are governed by Project Labor Agreements and Labor Peace agreements
- I argued that in return for \$80 million in subsidies, developers at Union Market should be required to have PLAs for all construction projects covered by this subsidy
- I supported wage theft legislation to greatly increase penalties for wage and give workers a private right of action.
- I helped advocate for the Large Retailer Accountability Act, minimum wage increases, fair scheduling for retail/restaurant workers, a fix to Metro without curtailing wages or benefits, legislation to stop short-term rental abuse, and eliminating the subminimum wage for tipped workers.

B: Workforce Violence:

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

Worker safety is one of government's key roles. In the absence of government action, there always will be employers who cut corners or knowingly put workers at risk by tolerating unsafe conditions. Healthcare environments are stressful for both staff and patients, because they often involve life-and-death situations. Workers in healthcare settings deserve to be safe as they try to improve the well-being, and even save the lives, of the people they serve. I support creating standards for workplace violence prevention that all healthcare providers must follow.

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

As Council Chair, I will select a Health Committee Chair who is committed to supporting workplace safety for healthcare workers. I will work with that Chair and unions for nurses and other healthcare workers to develop and promote comprehensive workplace violence prevention legislation to protect healthcare workers.

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?

Anyone who is in the hospital themselves or has a loved one in the hospital would want to make sure they receive safe handling when they need to be moved. And they would want to make sure the staff caring for them are not put at risk in these situations. I support legislation regulating patient handling to ensure that patients are treated safely and with compassion, and that healthcare workers are not put at risk of injury or long-term health problems.

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?

DC has a very high rate of health insurance coverage and yet has dramatic health disparities by race, income and zip code (which overlap significantly). The stresses of poverty, racism, and community violence mean that the zip code one lives in is the best predictor of health

Addressing health disparities must start with investing in stable communities and families that can reduce the stresses that lead to poor health. This includes creating affordable housing, supporting adequate incomes through policies that support good jobs, and progressive approaches to community safety that treat crime as a public health issue. These are top priorities in my campaign.

I also would work to improve access to high-quality care through strong support of UMC; eliminating administrative barriers that limit access to health coverage in DC's Healthcare Alliance program, affecting thousands of immigrants; improving the quality and reach of DC's Home Visiting programs for pregnant women and families with young children; and expanding the use of community health workers.

Will you highlight these problems in your election campaign?

Yes

No

other (explain below)

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

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*?

As Council Chair, I will make sure the District government continues to partner with public sector labor unions to improve the operations of DC government and to provide good working conditions to DC government employees. I will be a vocal advocate for the workers in public sector unions, including during contract negotiations. I would work with the Council to strengthen collective bargaining rights, and you can count on me to show up at and support workers on a picket line.

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)

I believe mayoral control of DCPS gave both the mayor and Council a larger stake in the success of schools, making way for important things like universal pre-K and new funding to support students at risk of academic failure.

On the other hand, mayoral control has created a serious lack of transparency over operations of the school system, allowing, for example, at-risk funds to be misused. The rollout of mayoral control of DCPS created added political pressure to focus on unrealistic progress on metrics like graduation rates, without fully addressing the fundamental needs of students. Mayoral control resulted in a concentration of power that paved the way for many problematic policies affecting teachers and students, including rating teachers based on test scores, putting additional time burdens on teachers, and closing dozens of schools.

And most important, mayoral control has not produced promised results in closing the achievement gap. The high school students now under the spotlight were in their first years of elementary school when mayoral takeover started.

I support changes to improve the transparency of DCPS and the ability of parents and other stakeholders to engage in school policy. I support the recent Council legislation to create an Education Research Advisory Board, and I would consider other ways to ensure that OSSE has sufficient independence as a state-level agency to oversee DCPS operations and make data available to stakeholders. And I will consider other ways to strengthen the oversight of DCPS operations and improve stakeholder engagement on key DCPS issues.

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)

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

Students benefit when good teachers stay on their jobs, both because of the benefit of school stability and because good teachers get better over time. First and foremost, all schools must have the resources they need to serve their students well. Beyond that, teacher churn can be reduced by a range of policies that support teachers: adequate pay, a manageable schedule, a strong voice in school management, and a fair evaluation policy.

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 have long been a champion of fiscal transparency. I understand that where public dollars are spent has a huge impact on the lives of DC residents, and that we cannot hold DCPS or other agencies accountable without clear financial information.

I will work to make sure parents and teachers, through LSATs, get educated on the DCPS budget process and receive proposed budgets that clearly lay out their options for modifying their school's budget to meet student needs. In particular, they need more transparency over their school's at-risk funding and choices for using them.

I also will partner with the chair of the Council's Education Committee to work collaboratively with DCPS to develop common-sense budgeting procedures and expenditure reporting on how DCPS funds are spent, with information that meets the needs of all stakeholders: DCPS principals and administrators, parents, teachers, the DC Council, and advocates.

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?
- What will you do to address this problem?

At its root, the achievement gap reflects systemic and historic racism and economic inequality, which have resulted in children's fate being tied their zip code. Most Black and Brown students attend schools where a majority of students meet DC's "at-risk" definition, while white students typically are in schools with low numbers of at-risk students. This means students bring stresses of poverty, housing instability, and their exposure to violence to school. The achievement gap persists because we do not do enough to acknowledge and respond to these challenges. I championed creating "at-risk" funds to provide additional

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services to these communities, as chair of the Public Education Finance Reform Commission in 2012, but have been extremely frustrated that DCPS uses half of its at-risk funds for other general purposes. DC also fails to provide enough summer- and after-school programs, creating a big gap between the experiences of high-income and low-income children. DC has not fulfilled the common-sense requirement of having a mental health professional in each school.

To address the gap:

I will ensure every dollar of at-risk funds is available as a supplement to basic school funding. I will work to increase the per-pupil at risk amount and to increase LSAT (parent and teacher) input on how those funds are used.

I will expand access to quality afterschool and summer programming so that every child has an opportunity for experiences to explore their passion and intellect -- and have fun.

I will fight for funding to put a mental health professional in every school.

I will work to make every high-poverty school a community school.

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?

As Council Chair, I would work to end the practice that essentially requires principals and assistant principals to re-apply for their job every year. These leaders cannot focus on their students adequately, or on long-term planning. I would push for longer-term contracts for principals and assistant principals and create a process for gaining tenure. I would work to establish due process rights to ensure that these staff are evaluated objectively and fairly, are supported to improve their performance, and have due process rights in the termination process.

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

In my work at the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, we supported the WFP report on short-term rental abuse, and we testified in favor of the legislation.

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?

Successful advocacy efforts, many of which I participated in, have led to the adoption of important labor laws in DC in recent years, including increases to the minimum wage, paid sick days, and new penalties for wage theft. But these laws are meaningful only if workers know about them and if enforcement is rigorous,

As part of the Just Pay coalition, I have worked in recent years to move DC's Department of Employment Services beyond enforcement that relies primarily on responding to complaints, to one that is more strategic and proactive. As Council Chair, I will continue to push for

adequate resources for enforcement, for more outreach to workers, and for strategic approaches to enforcement. This should include targeting industries that are most likely to have violations and where workers are least likely to speak up, using all enforcement tools (penalties, debarment, etc), and publicizing the worst cases of wage theft. I will engage the Just Pay coalition and workers' organizations to review these strategies and to identify the worst employers.

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)

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

My campaign is motivated by the need to take bold actions to address DC's growing racial and economic inequities. As Council Chair, I will work to:

- Fully implement DC's plan to end homelessness, and double investments in programs that build affordable housing, help first-time homebuyers, and provide rental assistance. I will work to move stalled legislation to improve rent control.

- Invest in children through in high-quality child care, afterschool and summer enrichment opportunities, mental health professionals in all schools, and ensuring funds intended for high-poverty schools are available to support students.
- Push for better jobs by protecting paid family and medical leave, protecting the ballot initiative to eliminate the lower minimum wage for tipped workers, and require fair scheduling for retail and restaurant workers. I will push for better accountability in DC’s job training programs, and will require that DC-funded or DC-subsidized development projects result in good jobs for DC residents.
- Require a “racial equity impact analysis” for all major pieces of legislation, including the DC budget. We need to ensure that DC budget and policy decisions will work to reduce racial inequities through an explicit review of all policies through a racial equity lens.

F: Transportation: (Please provide your response on a separate sheet).

1. Do you believe that any privatization of public transit is acceptable for the improvement of service at WMATA, DC Streetcar or DC Circulator? If so, please explain.

Yes No other (explain below)

2. In the 2018 legislative session in Maryland, ATU Local 689 aggressively pursued legislation to see assaults on transit workers charged as an automatic felony. Will you work to make sure D.C. joins Maryland in raising the penalty of assaults on transit employees?

Yes 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/Budget

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 are your top three priorities for the DC budget?

Candidate (Please Print Legibly): _____ Ed Lazere _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____ May 9, 2018 _____

Thank you.