

2022 Washington Post Questionnaire DC Council At-Large Election

Name:*

Karim D. Marshall, Esq.

Date of birth:*

September 9, 1980; Washington D.C. @ Greater Southeast Hospital

Neighborhood:*

Benning Ridge/Fort Dupont Park (Ward 7)

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Current occupation:

Attorney

What is your political affiliation?

Independent

What major endorsements do you have?

The Washington Teacher's Union

What is your first priority, if elected/re-elected?

To listen to the voters of the District and to improve the quality of our legislature, particularly in elevating the voices of underrepresented communities, by holistically addressing the lack of equity in city investment, programs, and resource deployment.

Are you in favor of ballot initiative 82, which would gradually eliminate the tipped minimum wage in the District?*

I support this, but I have been told by several tipped wage earners that they are concerned that they are going to see a net decrease in their wages as prices go up and customers stop tipping. Public discourse would benefit from more information from Initiative 82 supporters on how they plan to encourage customers to continue to tip and allay the concerns of tipped workers.

Should the D.C. Council reestablish a committee specifically focused on education?*

Yes

Do you support continued mayoral control of D.C. Public Schools?*

I would not discard centralized control, but it must be improved. This could be done by consolidating into a single point of accountability for both public and public charter schools: a professionalized Superintendent/Chancellor with substantial classroom and education administration experience. This person would be expected to engage with thought partners and stakeholders in the system and would be a technocrat with a fixed term that could only be terminated for cause or malfeasance like the current Chief Financial Officer.

I believe that a single point of accountability is an improvement over the prior system, but I do not believe the input of teachers and parents is meaningfully incorporated into the decisions made by DCPS leadership.

Would you vote in favor of Mayor Muriel E. Bowser's nominee for director of the Office of Unified Communications, acting director Karima Holmes?*

I would need to interview the candidate before determining whether to support her. There are advantages to confirming a former Director as she knows the agency, but she would have to present a clear plan/timeline to fix the current problems around operations/service delivery and show a commitment of resources from the EOM to earn confirmation.

Should D.C. employ more police officers than the current size of the force?*

It is important to start by acknowledging that people are rightfully worried about their safety. But, we have to move away from the illusion that the number of police officers on the force determines whether or not crimes occur. I would prefer to have a real and honest conversation about the society we are building and how we can shape accountability to be rehabilitative instead of solely punitive. The best way to reduce crime is to make sure that all residents believe they have a chance at a bright and dignified future.

Do you agree with a D.C. Council vote to remove police from D.C. public schools?*

Partially, I would have preferred a more thoughtful transition plan than what is in place. Police officers should be used to secure the perimeter and external spaces of our schools to protect teachers and children from potential external threats. Particularly because schools are habitually viewed as soft targets. However, I do not support armed patrols inside schools because it reinforces the habituation of our students to supervision by an armed force. Further, the presence of law enforcement officers in schools increases the likelihood of arrest and charges as the consequences for misbehavior.

Do you support a new Washington Commanders football stadium in the District?*

The RFK site is approximately 190 acres. The largest NFL stadium in the US is around 60 acres. I do not believe that the District should use any public funds to pay for land preparation of the site and any private developer that gets the land should pay fair market value for it. Under those conditions, the site is large enough to meet several uses and needs and I look forward to seeing what plans the Mayor can develop.

Should D.C. replace on-street parking in some places with bus lanes or bike lanes?*

It depends on the street.

Would you support increasing the density of some parts of the city, such as converting single-family zoning to zoning that allows construction of multi-family buildings?*

It depends on the corridor.

What bill(s), if any, would you introduce to increase the supply of affordable housing in the District? *

I would start with making sure the existing programs are being properly run and maximizing the use of available dollars before creating new programs.

However, additional techniques that can be explored are: Homestead Deduction Automatic enrollment - I would revise the statutory requirements for the Homestead Deduction to automatically enroll new homebuyers into the protections afforded by this program.

Student Debt allowance - I would also advocate to adjust the eligibility for any programs that are funded with local dollars to exclude non-dischargeable debt (such as student loans) from the debt-to-income ratio to determine eligibility for home purchase programs.

Home Purchase Assistance Program - I would overhaul the program so qualification lasted a full year, was less burdensome, and was proactively renewed. HPAP participants have frequently reported that they cannot compete with more well-resourced buyers not because of offer price, but because the HPAP program is so much more complicated and slower than a conventional buyer's financing.

Further, the District's programs are not particularly transparent or understandable to the average resident. The government should aggressively partner with entities like DCAR to provide early education on housing purchase programs and financial literacy. Residents may need multiple points of exposure before they fully understand that home ownership is within their reach, but the American dream is too important to leave to chance.

Transparency would also cure much of the skepticism that residents have regarding these programs. For example, listening to voters, there is a resounding consensus amongst residents that programs like Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) only work for the politically well-connected. I know the dedicated public servants who run these programs, their challenge is being under-resourced. They could also benefit from more reliable grant partners and an upgrade in the IT system used to administer IZ. I would further reform the IZ lottery program to make a resident's placement and place on the IZ list more transparently known to low- to moderate-income residents. Your likelihood of quality housing shouldn't feel like random chance.