

Basic information

1. **Name:** Zachary Parker
2. **Current Occupation (if applicable):** Educator
3. **Party Affiliation:** Democrat
4. **Have you been a public servant before? What positions and when?** State Board of Education, Ward 5, elected 2018. Selected by peers as Board president in 2021
5. **How long have you lived in your jurisdiction?** 8 years
6. **Which office are you seeking?** Ward 5 DC Councilmember
7. **Why are you seeking this office?**

My work on the State Board of Education has shown me the obstacles families face obtaining affordable housing, accessing basic amenities like grocery stores, and addressing rising violence in their communities. I grew up as one of three sons. I lost my 36-year-old brother, Cecil, in 2016 to kidney failure after a long and exhaustive battle with the healthcare system. Meanwhile, seeing my oldest brother, who did not get the same educational opportunities as I did, live paycheck to paycheck has given me direct experience with the pain of navigating the pitfalls of a one-size-fits-all school system and economy. I got into teaching and education to transform the systems that failed my brother and so many like him.

Ultimately, I decided to seek the Ward 5 Council seat after being encouraged to consider a run by trusted leaders in the Ward and when I saw the impact COVID-19 had on my neighbors and the city's inadequate and inequitable support for Ward 5 residents at the onset of the pandemic. I am running to build healthy communities with my Ward 5 community where neighbors have what they need. We need transformational, bold change in partnership with existing communities to stop predictable patterns of corruption, violence, and displacement.

8. Why are you soliciting Metro DC DSA's endorsement for this office?

I share DSA's belief that necessities of life — clean air and water, jobs that pay enough, health care, stable and affordable housing — should be rights for every Washingtonian, not privileges. I recall when I requested DSA's support in helping Ward 5 neighbors make a vaccination plan, members rallied and demonstrated their organizing power. In a competitive and crowded Democratic primary — with establishment-backed candidates who will fight to maintain the status quo — it will be essential to have a dedicated team to mobilize Ward 5 neighbors to prove once again that organized people power can prevail over the powerful few.

9. Please list other significant endorsements you've received for this position or for prior races:

- In my 2018 race for the State Board of Education, I was endorsed by the following organizations:
 1. Washington Teachers' Union
 2. Jews United For Justice (JUFJ)
 3. People For the American Way

4. Washington Post

DSA and democratic socialism

1. Are you a member of DSA? If not, would you join? Why or why not?

Yes

2. How does the campaign you are planning and the office that you are considering relate to your theory of social change?

I believe change happens from the bottom-up versus top-down. That is why I am running a grassroots, people-first, future-focused campaign and participating in DC's Fair Elections Program. Furthermore, I believe that we are all connected and in the "linked fate" of marginalized peoples. That is why I am building a diverse campaign that appeals to all Ward 5 residents, one that works to address the needs of our most vulnerable residents.

I am committed to addressing our city's most complex issues head-on as our Ward and communities change so drastically, so rapidly. I am also committed to racial equity and addressing the needs of Black and brown residents who have braved the burden of racist policies of the past and remain at the bottom of every city-wide metric, whether it be education, health, crime, or economic. We all thrive when we meet the needs of those who have been the most disinvested.

All Ward 5 neighbors — regardless of background or zip code — are entitled to safe streets, affordable housing, clean air and water, quality education, and a government that represents the people. Therefore, I am focusing on the key issues facing Ward 5 and the city, as voiced by Ward 5 voters, including improving our schools, expanding systems of care, and fighting against environmental racism.

I believe that too much of our political establishment supports a status quo approach to confronting our complex issues. We need to rewire our government and revolutionize how we approach problem solving itself to address the root causes of the issues we face.

We can no longer make empty promises while continuing to support inequitable systems that produce predictable outcomes.

3. Do you identify as a democratic socialist? Why?

Admittedly, I am still learning. Therefore, I am deliberately choosing not to mark 'yes' or 'no.' While I share democratic socialism's criticisms of capitalism — which I view as inextricably linked to institutionalized and westernized racism — 'yes' feels disingenuous, at the moment at least, in the context of my upbringing and my full worldview.

Like many Black folks I know, I grew up without a deep awareness of democratic socialism. I have not been rooted in this tradition and have much to learn. I continue to wrestle with these questions of labels and the ways that ideology can sometimes make us rigid instead of joyful.

As the son of a minister with love for Black peoples throughout the diaspora and a deeply-held belief that we need more systems where ordinary people have a power in their workplaces, neighborhoods, and government, my ideology aligns most closely with this description of Ella Baker: "She combined the Black Baptist missionary values of charity, humility, and service with the economic theories of socialists of various stripes who advocated a redistribution of society's wealth and a transfer of power from capitalist elites to the poor and working classes."

If you choose to endorse me, I look forward to fighting alongside you for tenant rights, robust rent control, demilitarization of MPD, decriminalization of poverty, increasing wages, strengthening worker protections and ownership, expanding democracy in public education system by moving away from our extreme form of mayoral control, and unleashing the power of Black and brown communities left behind by our racist and classist economic policies.

4. Are you willing to run publicly as a democratic socialist? [Yes/No]

I am willing to publicly lead with our shared values. Ward 5 is home to many native Washingtonians and older residents in my community who share democratic socialist values, yet often associate the words "progressive" and "socialism" with wealth, privilege, and whiteness, not something connected to their experiences. Our campaign has found success meeting residents where they are. Building a powerful coalition based on shared values, rather than identifiers or labels. To build a campaign rooted in economic liberation, I will be fighting for the priorities that DSA embraces. I will work to talk about these priorities in a way that connects with all Ward 5 residents.

That means I may not talk about "socialism", but you will see me championing and defining my campaign with values that we share.

5. Will you be willing to run with other DSA-endorsed candidates as a slate? [Yes/No]

- Yes

6. Will you publicize DSA's endorsement? [Yes/No]

- Yes

7. Will you pledge not to take any campaign contributions from for-profit corporations or for-profit corporate PACs? [Yes/No]

- Yes

8. Will you pledge not to take any campaign contributions from real estate developers, corporate lobbyists, and landlords? [Yes/No]

- Yes

9. Will you pledge not to take any campaign contributions or endorsements from organizations in the carceral system (such as law enforcement unions)? [Yes/No]

- Yes
10. **Are you open to working with DSA when developing your platform? [Yes/No]**
- Yes
11. **Will you allow Metro DC DSA to create campaign materials to distribute during its work on your campaign? [Yes/No]**
- That would be an Independent Expenditure, that I am not allowed to control or coordinate with DSA. A decision by DSA to create campaign materials is solely up to DSA.
12. **DSA has a large and active volunteer base. Will you support DSA training our own volunteers, running our own canvases, and campaigning openly as DSA members? [Yes/No]**
- Yes
13. **Will you allow DSA to collaborate with you on your field plan and program? [Yes/No]**
- Yes, I am eager to have DSA as a partner and to learn from their experiences in other DC campaigns
14. **Will you allow DSA to keep copies of all data we collect through voter contact, if legal in your jurisdiction? [Yes/No]**
- Yes, to the extent allowed under DC law

Goals of your campaign

15. **What is your estimated number of votes needed to win? 7,012**
16. **What are your plans, beyond what Metro DC DSA can bring to the table, for obtaining the number of votes needed to win?**

My team is most focused on a targeted field strategy through each of the 19 precincts in Ward 5 so that we will knock on enough doors and identify enough Team Zachary voters to be able to meet our goals in each precinct, supplemented by doing 1-1s and registering others in areas with low voter turnout.

We reached the public financing threshold in less than 12 hours and already have a large core of volunteers. Our campaign has real viability and a deep connection to Ward 5. I have built relationships with and am working on securing endorsements from other reliably progressive groups and their voters. This will help us operate a vigorous field operation, which will be so important in a crowded primary that traditionally has low turnout.

We are building a multi-racial coalition rooted in solidarity. I am an extremely hard worker, deep listener, and effective communicator who has already built relationships with grassstops and grassroots leaders across the Ward, including school leaders, teachers, ANCs, Civic Association Presidents, and senior center Presidents. I am already running a high-energy campaign and will continue to do so.

17. What are the issues that will distinguish you from other candidates? How are those issues popular with the electorate?

- Community safety without over-policing and mass incarceration of Black and brown residents. Specifically, this looks like expanding the funding and power of ONSE, building it into a nonviolent alternative to the police that does consistent community outreach and connects the existing violence prevention programs and agencies. I also support the recommendations of the Police Reform Commission to de-center police in our approach to public safety.
- Permanently and Deeply Affordable Housing: We need to build housing intentionally for those who need it most. We need to prioritize government spending on existing, successful, non-market models of community-ownership like the Douglass CLT, social public housing, and limited equity co-ops. I also support Reclaim Rent Control's platform. And we need to continue eviction prevention programs in the wake of the ending of STAY DC, but they need to be HELP-first, instead of the bureaucratic nightmare that it has been.
- Generational Wealth: Our economic policies need to prioritize closing the racial wealth gap and creating community wealth, not preserving the status quo of concentrated corporate wealth. I support making those with more pay their fair share and even exploring an ultra-wealth tax in order to seed permanent funds for cooperative ownership in housing, food, healthcare, and nonviolent community safety.
- Environmental Racism and a Green New Deal: Our campaign is about building healthy communities and meeting basic need. This includes clean air and water, healthy food systems, and an ecosystems approach to land use, urban planning, industrial zoning, and waste. The issues of climate are not just about carbon accounting, but instead fundamentally transforming our relationship within nature. This is how we build truly healthy communities.

18. If you are challenging an incumbent, what distinguishes you from the incumbent? Why would you be an improvement over the incumbent?

There is no incumbent in the race.

19. How much money will you need to successfully compete in this race and what is your plan to raise it?

- We plan to get the full Fair Elections match of \$233,000, from \$47,000 in small-dollars donations from DC residents, and the \$40,000 base payment. That will provide \$320,000 total.
- We received over 180 donors, mostly from Ward 5, on our first day after filing.
- We will focus in the later parts of the campaign on aggressively continuing our small-dollar fundraising across the Ward and the city, as well as asking our large team to get a few \$50 donations from friends and family anywhere in the country.

20. What relationships do you have in your district that could form a base of support, through activism, organizing, work or personal networks?

- As the current Ward 5 representative on the State Board of Education, I have developed relationships across DC and the Ward, including grassroots and grassroots leaders, including school leaders, teachers, ANCs, Civic Association Presidents, and senior center Presidents.
- I have 15 honorary co-chairs who are community leaders across Ward 5 and focused on relational organizing in their networks and communities.

21. What endorsements do you have from elected officials, political organizations, unions and community leaders? What other endorsements are you seeking and why?

- I will be seeking endorsements of other groups like WFP, Sunrise, DC4D and JUFJ, as well as teachers, school leaders, labor unions, and senior leaders.
- I believe the endorsements will be critical and will build the core of our strong field team.

22. How will you use your campaign to build Metro DC DSA? Democratic socialism in DC/Maryland/Virginia?

- I will work to build your base in predominantly older Black communities that make up the majority of Ward 5. I will stress the values and principles that underlie democratic socialism -- transformative and environmental justice, non-market housing models, and worker-ownership, as well as holding corporate power accountable to the people.

23. How do you strike the balance between your positions as a socialist and your ability to appeal to the broader electorate?

To build a campaign rooted in economic liberation, my positions and labels have to connect with the needs and collective vision of Ward 5 residents. I've found success building a powerful coalition rooted in relationships that bridge cultures and generations, focusing on shared values, honoring the past, and a transformative policy vision for the future.

As noted above, many Black residents, who make up half of my base of relationships, do not use the slogans and language of socialism. But I am confident that a wide array of voters, include long-term Black residents, share my frustration with current systems and support bold reforms, including alternatives to over-policing of Black and brown communities, permanently and deeply affordable housing with wraparound services, and standing up to the selling out of Ward 5 communities to developers and polluting corporations. My coalition is built on bridging the generations of my community without a focus on labels.

Rather than water-down tough issues, I am partnering with the community to build a bold policy platform that speaks to Ward 5 communities and distinguishes me from the status quo way of doing politics. Voters have experience with me working in the community to

help them with basic needs. I will continue to build trust and ask voters to shape our vision for a better future.

Goals in office

24. **Would you be open to having DSA members as staff in policy positions and/or to collaborating with our working groups on policy?**
 - Yes
25. **Will you agree to appear periodically at DSA meetings in your district?**
 - Yes
26. **Will you endorse and campaign for other DSA endorsed candidates in the future?**
 - Yes
27. **How will you use your office, if elected, to build socialism and working class power?**
 - I will focus on building working class power by prioritizing worker ownership, economic democracy, and cooperatives. I will model the partnership model of power and expand democracy to include communities meaningfully in decision-making, policy-making, and constituent services. My top priority will be to sure that our city services are connected, communicative, and easy to use.
28. **If elected, what are your top 3 priorities?**
 - **Community Safety and Violence Prevention:** I will work with colleagues to act on the Police Reform Commission's recommendations while advancing key [preventive measures](#) without over-policing and mass incarceration of Black and brown residents. I will push to enact aspects of my [Safe Streets Platform](#), which I see connected to community safety, as well as expanding the funding and power of the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE). I would build it into a comprehensive, nonviolent alternative to the police that does consistent community outreach and connects the existing violence prevention programs and agencies.
 - **Education:** I will work with colleagues to: 1) Expand critical student supports (i.e., special education services, literacy interventions, counselors, social workers, nurses, and mental health supports) and out-of-school time funding/programming to bolster student learning (and reduce the numbers of youth put on a fast track through the school-to-prison pipeline; 2) balance accountability of schools with ongoing, true support for all LEAs through a multi-tiered system of support for all of DC's public schools, looking to Massachusetts and Nebraska as examples; and 3) ensure we equitably fund our schools, especially those in Wards 5, 7, and 8.
 - **Permanently and Deeply Affordable Housing:** I will work with colleagues to build housing intentionally for those who need it most. We need to prioritize government spending on existing, successful, non-market models of community-ownership like the Douglass CLT, social public housing, and limited equity co-ops. I also support Reclaim Rent Control's platform. And we need to

replenish the STAY DC program with additional funding for eviction prevention that is easy to access.

29. How will you implement those priorities, given that you will likely face opposition from other elected officials?

I am a bridge builder, as witnessed by being elected president on the State Board of Education by my peers unanimously. I am eager for change, not introducing legislation for show and performative equity.

As the Council evolves, I will work to build partnerships with Council members who share our values while carefully selecting my priorities and working collaboratively with community leaders to provide outside pressure where it is most needed. The effort this year to raise income taxes reflected months of behind-the-scenes planning and coalition building. Even the more conservative members of the Council are moving to co-opt the language of equity, so there is a massive opportunity for real change with the support of the community.

I've built relationships with leaders and lawmakers that I disagree with on many issues, knowing that I will need to use these connections in order to push for real changes to the economic and political status quo. A 13 member legislature requires this in order to get things done, and I know where to push in order to change the game.

Questions for Incumbents

1. Tell us about a success/political win you championed/led that created material wins/improved conditions for the working class in your district?
 - I'm not an incumbent on the Council, but I am the only other Ward 5-wide elected official. I've used my influence and my position help Ward 5 neighbors make a plan to get vaccinated and address HVAC issues in schools , secure funding for dilapidated public schools, and more below:
 - Coordinated volunteers to knock on 3,000+ doors during the pandemic to help Ward 5 neighbors make a plan to get vaccinated and take advantage of rental assistance programs
 - Provided Ward 5 seniors over 1,000 meals and care packages with gloves, masks, and hand sanitizer throughout the pandemic
 - Established the Ward 5 Education Equity Committee — after years of inactivity and gridlock with the Ward 5 Council on Education — to give Ward 5 families and educators a voice in citywide education policy debates
 - Established the Ward 5 Education Collaborative to raise and disperse funding to Ward 5 school communities to advance equity and support student outcomes

- Established the Ward 5 Back-to-School Supplies Giveaway Event which has provided nearly \$20,000 in school supplies to Ward 5 students
 - Helped block proposed cuts to transportation plan for homeless youth in Ward 5
 - Helped register more than 100 Ward 5 residents for the STAYDC program so they can avoid eviction
2. What obstacles did you face in office and how do you plan to address these obstacles if re-elected? NA

Metro DC DSA Priorities

In February 2021, Metro DC DSA voted to approve four priority campaigns: Defund MPD, Stomp Out Slumlords (housing justice), Green New Deal and Labor. These priorities are subject to annual changes.

Defunding MPD and abolition

MDC DSA's Defund MPD Working Group is organizing in coalition with Black-led and racial justice organizations to defund the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, remove police from schools, and free our neighbors from occupation and incarceration as a path towards abolition — a world without cops and prisons. As part of our vision for racial and economic justice, we demand that the funding removed from police and prisons be reinvested in real public safety: housing, schools, jobs, healthcare and mental health services, community-based support programs, violence interruption, and other public goods and services. This aspiration is a core part of our vision of socialism.

MDC DSA has endorsed the [demands](#) of the Defund MPD coalition, including reducing funding for MPD by 50% over the next three years. In Montgomery County, MD, Metro DC DSA participates in the Defund and Reinvest Coalition (see demands [here](#))

1. Do you support defunding the police in your jurisdiction? Why?

I support the calls of the Police Reform Commission and Defund MPD coalition to decenter police in our approach to public safety.

DC has more police per capita than any city and it has not improved safety. Our current approach leaves us less safe. The killings this year of Black people by police are a sign that this approach is harmful. We have to find another solution.

I think we need to build a comprehensive public health approach that connects and fully funds our various violence prevention programs while doing consistent outreach and relationship-building in the community. From traffic safety to schools to addressing mental health crises, we must create non-police teams who are specially trained to help

address our people's needs. We can build a dependable alternative to the police to lead with a health approach and address the root causes of crime.

2. What actions would you take in office to shift power away from the police?
 - End qualified immunity
 - Put real cap on overtime
 - Ban use of military equipment
 - Create real police oversight -- through DC Auditor and Office of Police Complaints
 - Ban police chases

3. **What actions would you take in office to end mass incarceration?**
 - End mandatory minimums
 - Decriminalize behaviors that instead should be addressed through a public health approach, like adult drug use, mental health crises, sex work, and homelessness

4. **Do you support removing school resource officers from schools?**
 - Yes. I voted for this as a SBOE member and I support reducing the presence of police officers in District public schools. Time and time again I've heard from our young people that armed officers roaming the hallways of their schools do not make them feel safe.

5. **Many local police departments participate in training with Israeli military and/or police in what opponents of such programs call the "Deadly Exchange," furthering practices of surveillance, militarization and racist violence and policing. Would you support ending these police exchanges?**
 - Yes

6. **Which demands of the Defund MPD coalition do you support? Why?**
 - Shift away from police response to behavioral health crises
 - Create non-police initial response to 911 -- like CAHOOTS in Eugene, Oregon
 - Invest in affordable housing and stable communities
 - Limit police powers (as answered above)
 - Decriminalize behaviors that merit public health response, like drugs

7. **Do you disagree with the ideas behind the demands of the Defund MPD coalition? Why?**

I would not prescribe specific reduction targets over a specific timeframe. We need to fully fund alternatives to policing and show the power, reliability, and success of transformative and comprehensive community safety to build trust and buy-in, especially

with older residents. I support the Police Reform Commission recommendation of reducing the police force at least at the rate of attrition.

Stomp Out Slumlords and housing justice

Stomp Out Slumlords (SOS) fights evictions and supports tenant organizing throughout the Washington metro area. The group began in 2017 as an effort to canvas tenants threatened with eviction to educate them about their rights and encourage them to defend themselves in court. Since then, SOS has gradually focused more and more on organizing tenant unions and going on the offensive to demand concessions from major landlords and developers.

During the pandemic, SOS committed to the movement to cancel rent and expanded their organizing efforts into more than 25 buildings in and around DC and supported rent strikes in most of them. Since the spring 2020, they have mobilized hundreds of people to protest politicians and landlords and stop illegal evictions through direct action.

SOS is now one of the largest and most militant tenant organizations in the region, and they have won rent forgiveness plans from big developers and played an important role in getting and defending some of the nation's strongest emergency tenant protections.

Metro DC DSA is also a member of the [Reclaim Rent Control coalition](#), which seeks to expand and strengthen current rent control laws in DC.

1. Do you believe guaranteed housing is a human right?

Yes. Stable housing is the foundation of strong families and healthy communities. Our lack of truly affordable housing is displacing Black and brown residents in Ward 5 and citywide, making DC the most gentrified city. Homeownership is out of reach for most and all our programs to build and offer affordable housing do not meet the needs of the community.

Our leaders aren't doing enough to fund enough deeply and permanently affordable housing or to target what we build to the lowest-income people and families (30% of the median income and below). Too often "affordable housing" is not really affordable, only affordable for a little while, and not built for those who need it. We need to build intentionally.

2. What steps would you take to expand renter protections in your jurisdiction?

- Extend eviction moratorium (with funds to make landlords whole) at least through next summer
- Make rental assistance and eviction prevention programs help-first instead of forcing people to work endlessly to get some support
- Strengthen rent control through the Reclaim Rent Control platform

- Bring back TOPA for single family homes and strengthen it to incentivize collective ownership through community land trusts and limited-equity coops.

3. What steps would you take to expand rent control in your jurisdiction?

I support the Reclaim Rent Control platform.

4. What will do to increase affordable housing in your jurisdiction?

As noted, DC's housing efforts have been hampered by too little resources and by defining affordable housing at 80% AMI or even higher. That is \$100,000 for a family of 4 and well above median Black household income. I will work to ensure that affordable housing targets families and residents at 30% AMI - where it is most needed. Developers should be incentivized or even required to build units with 3 or more bedrooms and there should be a minimum percentage of deeply affordable units. We also need to build intentionally to house groups in special need, like seniors, returning citizens, and LGBTQ+ residents.

Not only do we need to increase our funding for affordable housing, but we need to make sure the Housing Production Trust Fund is not being used as a slush fund to subsidize developers while asking nothing in return.

Affordable development should prioritize permanently affordable housing models that protect renters and build collective ownership: community land trusts, limited equity co-ops, and social housing. Additionally, the District should use city-owned land to build these permanently affordable housing developments. I would introduce a bill to expand DOPA (District Opportunity to Purchase Act) to get more city-owned land and make use of vacant or blighted housing, as well as bringing back TOPA (Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act) for single-family homes so renters have a chance to buy their home before it is fed to the market.

5. Do you support ending exclusionary zoning?

Yes. Too often zoning has been the bureaucratic tool of systemic racism and prevented Black and brown communities from building generational wealth. We should end this practice.

Green New Deal

Metro DC DSA's Green New Deal campaign organizes to fight the existential crisis of capitalist-driven climate change and environmental racism in the DMV area.

As a grassroots movement, they build and exercise power through labor and tenant unions, electoral campaigns, diverse coalition-building, political education, and policy change. Their vision is to decommodify and guarantee human needs, democratize and decarbonize the

economy by 2030, and repair the generational effects of oppression and displacement of Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

Metro DC DSA is a member of the [We Power DC](#) (WPDC) coalition. WPDC's goal is to replace Pepco with a democratically-run municipal utility rooted in the principles of energy democracy. This coalition launched in October 2019 as the #NoPepcoPledge, which asked DC Council candidates to reject donations from Pepco and support a feasibility study on alternative utility models. The group's current demands include utility debt forgiveness, a permanent ban on utility shut offs and union wages for all Pepco contractors.

1. Do you support municipalizing utilities in your jurisdiction? Why or why not?

Yes. Utilities are a basic necessity and should not be operating to extract wealth from our community. A community-owned utility would operate at lower cost and would be better suited to make decisions in the public interest, including meeting our renewable energy goals. And the money that Ward 5 residents would be spending on utilities would be going directly into improving and investing in new local infrastructure, instead of the pockets of corporate shareholders.

2. Do you support ending utility shut offs and forgiving utility debt in your jurisdiction? Why or why not?

Yes, utility shut offs often are the start of a process of traumatic and destabilizing evictions. When a family is struggling to pay their bills, the government should provide support and resources to help them get on their feet and have their debt forgiven. In a city that always finds money for developers and special interests, we should be supporting struggling families without making them jump through hoops to "prove" that they are worthy. Everyone deserves and is worthy of support.

3. Will you accept donations from energy utilities?

No.

4. What steps should your jurisdiction take to decarbonize the economy by 2030? How will you ensure that this happens?

We need to decarbonize our economy and stop our toxic reliance on fossil fuels that not only is harming the planet, but it also is harming children and communities in Ward 5 through air pollution and astronomical levels of asthma.

We should strengthen building energy performance standards, expand solar for all, electrify our Metrobus fleet, mandate new housing to be all-electric, and subsidize low-income households to make the switch and improve their energy efficiency. As for non-residential buildings, we should mandate new buildings be net-zero carbon and support energy efficiency improvements in

existing buildings. We should make polluters pay fines for the harm they do to our communities so it becomes harder to be unsustainable and unhealthy.

Finally, I am eager to see and support the Green New Deal for DC legislation that is being developed and think we need to more aggressively implement the Clean Energy DC legislation.

Labor

The Labor Working Group organizes with workers, including DSA members, from across the region to fight bad bosses, build new unions, and turn out for solidarity actions. Organizing the working class in their workplaces, whether through traditional collective bargaining and unions or other types of organizations, is central to socialist thought and practice. Especially here in the DMV, unions are diverse working-class organizations that build multi-racial solidarity through collective action for community transformation.

1. How will you support public sector unions in your jurisdiction?

All workers deserve to have a voice and should have the right to work together to build their power through a union. It was a strong WTU that pushed back against efforts in 2020 to fully reopen schools despite there being no vaccine or meaningful safety infrastructure.

I will support union boycotts and strikes, and I think we should explore how we could strengthen collective bargaining in the city. I will call for project labor agreements and labor peace agreements for all DC public projects.

I was endorsed by the Washington Teachers' Union in my SBOE race and I hope to earn their endorsement again.

2. How will you expand union density in the DC area?

I will ensure that publicly funded construction projects require union labor agreements and will support funding of apprenticeships that include union partners. I also support the right of charter school teachers to organize.

3. How will you support collective bargaining and the right to strike in your jurisdiction?

- See answers to #1 and #2

4. Do you support increasing the minimum wage in your jurisdiction?

Yes. DC's minimum wage is \$15 and adjusts for inflation, but this still doesn't keep up with increases in cost of living. We should explore further increases to minimum wage, as well as finally implementing a citywide guaranteed income that would start with care-workers and mothers. I also think we need to listen to the will of the people in terms of increases to tipped minimum wage. That the Council overturned a citizen-approved Initiative 77 in 2018 is

unacceptable. I support the 2022 initiative to eliminate the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers and will work to protect it on the DC Council if it is approved by DC voters, as I expect.

Other issues

Palestine

In 2017, the Democratic Socialists of America adopted a resolution at its national convention in support of Palestinian civil society's call for a global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement until Israel ends its illegal colonization of Palestinian lands, ensures equal rights for Palestinians living within Israel, and guarantees the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes.

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan [issued](#) an executive order in 2017 prohibiting executive agencies from entering into procurement contracts with business entities that engage in boycotts of Israel or territories occupied by Israel. The Maryland General Assembly has also debated and passed bills declaring that it is the policy of the state to oppose public institutions' support for boycotts for Palestinian rights.

In 2016, Virginia lawmakers [passed](#) a non-binding resolution that officially condemns boycotts for Palestinian rights. Two other measures, which would have become binding laws, have failed. These measures include a 2016 anti-boycott bill and a 2017 effort to redefine antisemitism under Virginia's antidiscrimination law to include advocacy for Palestinian rights.

Metro DC DSA expects that any endorsed candidates and public official would oppose anti-BDS legislation and vocally support Palestinian rights.

- 1. Do you support the Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) to pressure Israel until it complies with international law by ending the occupation, instituting equal rights for its Palestinian citizens and respecting Palestinian refugees' right to return? [Yes/No]**
 - Yes

- 2. Do you pledge to refrain from accepting any invitation from the Israeli government or participating in any event sponsored by it, until it fully complies with its obligations under international law? [Yes/No]**
 - Yes

- 3. Do you pledge to oppose any official adoption of a redefinition of antisemitism to include opposition to Israel's policies or legal system, or support for non-violent measures meant to press for changes in Israeli policies or laws? [Yes/No]**
 - Yes

Would you like to expand on your answer?

We can work to hold the Israeli government accountable to humane treatment and relations with Palestinians while also vigorously opposing anyone who uses this issue as a thin veil for their hate and anti-semitism.

4. Do you oppose state legislative and executive efforts that penalize individuals, universities and entities that boycott Israel?

- Yes

Racial justice

1. How would you use your office to combat racism in the educational system?

First, I would push to fully fund Birth-to-Three to fulfill the promise of universal pre-K and childcare for our majority Black student body. Then I would follow through on my State Board (SBOE) vote and push for more social workers in schools instead of police officers who often criminalize our Black and brown youth. We need to ensure that every school has enough counselors, nurses, and mental health professionals, starting with our most disadvantaged schools. And we must ensure students can get to school safely and without violence or trauma.

We need a unified vision for our education system that makes clear what guaranteed inputs parents can expect from all schools — from well-rounded curricula that look beyond math and literacy to a more equitable school funding formula that prioritizes our schools that need the most support. And we need an equitable PACE Act that prioritizes school modernizations in Wards 5, 7, 8 just as we have in other areas of the city.

As I have fought for on the State Board of Education, we must also more broadly define school quality beyond student performance on math and literacy standardized tests. While valid, school quality encompasses so much more than tests: teacher tenure, school climate, and the availability of extracurricular courses. This also means we must reevaluate teacher evaluation systems – across all LEAs – which typically penalize Black and brown teachers more harshly than their white peers, and are responsible for the significant decline in the number of teachers of color in DC. Too many Black and brown students are trapped in schools labeled with a low number of STARs, where teachers are vilified, that don't receive sufficient support. This must change.

2. How would you address racism in access to employment and the racial wealth gap?

I want to build on the rich history of cooperatives that build generational wealth in Black and brown communities. And when DC government contracts for work to be done, there must be meaningful requirements to guarantee that the money is being invested in DC residents. As DC

moves to create a regulated cannabis industry, it must be designed intentionally to support the Black and brown residents who have been most harmed by prior cannabis criminal policies.

We have many existing jobs and entrepreneurship programming through the Summer Youth Employment Program, 202creates, and vocational training. What I'd like to build on top of this is wraparound services, especially for returning citizens, and a shared entrepreneurial infrastructure for folks who want to make a living but can't afford all the paperwork and fees that starting a business requires. These programs, as well as unemployment insurance, should incorporate personal coaching so that folks can find their own purpose and career path, not just a check.

I've proposed both a guaranteed green jobs program and a guaranteed income for mothers and care workers. These investments would be transformational for our communities. We also must expand support for first-time homebuyers, especially for those that grew up in the city.

I also think we need to have conversations about what reparations for Black DC residents might look like. We need to be creative with these proposals and make sure that they are sustainably funded and holistically reparative, not just one check dumped on Black folks without an acknowledgement of ongoing systemic racism.

Health justice

1. Do you believe that healthcare is a human right? What actions would you take to support universal healthcare?

Yes, I support a Medicare for All, single payer program in DC. In the short term, I would work to eliminate the discriminatory and harmful requirement that participants in the DC Healthcare Alliance - nearly all of whom are immigrants - apply twice a year in person just to maintain eligibility

2. How would you support ending medical debt?

I support efforts to eliminate surprise billing and other things that contribute to exorbitant medical debt. Going forward we need to make it easier for people to get their debt forgiven and to ensure that people do not have to report medical debt on loan or housing applications.

3. How would you support expanding abortion rights?

As long as we are under congressional control, DC leaders must fight and lobby Congress to end the ban on using our own funds to support abortions for low-income women. In the meantime, we must affirmatively declare a woman's right to choose legislatively in the Council. In the face of new anti-choice laws in other states and a radically regressive Supreme Court, DC must model what true reproductive justice can look like.

Migrant justice

- 1. Do you support classifying and publicly announcing your jurisdiction as a sanctuary for undocumented immigrants?**

Yes

- 2. Do you support the unconditional abolition of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE)?**

Yes

- 3. Do you support prohibiting local law enforcement from cooperating with ICE or participating in deportation activities?**

Yes -- in the last 5 years nearly 50 people were transferred from the DC jail to ICE -- I will vote to prohibit that practice

- 4. Will you oppose the operation of any migrant detention facility in your jurisdiction (whether run by ICE, another government agency, or privately run), and oppose the transfer of any migrants in your jurisdiction to such facilities**

Yes