

1. Affordable Housing: Estimates show nearly half of all D.C. renters spend more than 30% of their income on rent. What resources, if any, will you implement to create more affordable housing options in the District?

I will :

- Fix Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Rehousing was designed as a bridge to permanent stability. A DC auditor's report found that 79% of families exit the program without any increase in income, meaning they're released into the same unaffordable market that made them homeless in the first place. The problem isn't Rapid Rehousing; it's that the District hasn't been using the program as a bridge. I will fight to pair RRH participation with real pathways to permanent housing: prioritized voucher placement, individualized case management with genuine income-building support, and a requirement that no family exits from RRH without a confirmed next step.

- Fund the Housing Production Trust Fund, And Mean It

The Housing Production Trust Fund is DC's single most powerful tool for building deeply affordable housing and has never fully met its legal requirement to direct at least 50% of funds to households below 30% of AMI for people who need it the most. I will fight to fully fund the HPTF and enforce its statutory targets. Nearly 70% of DC renters earning below 30% of the area median income are paying more than half their income in rent, which is an emergency that demands the deepest subsidy we have.

- Put Public Land to Work

There are only 32 affordable and available homes for every 100 extremely low-income renter households in the District. When the District owns land, as it does at sites like the Chevy Chase Civic Core, the land value itself is the subsidy, enabling the deep affordability that the private market cannot deliver. I will vote to surplus public land for affordable housing development and push to maximize the number of deeply affordable units on every publicly owned site.

- Reform DCHA from Within

Leasing a unit to a voucher holder currently takes 45–60 days, with landlord payments delayed by two to nine months. Those delays cost us landlords, drive units out of the voucher program, and leave families in limbo. I served on the DCHA Board. I know the agency's failures intimately. I know reform requires persistent, informed oversight. On the Council, I will use every oversight tool available to push DCHA to modernize its inspection and leasing processes, expand landlord participation, and make the voucher system work for the people it was built to serve.

- Strengthen and Expand Rent Stabilization

Over 75,000 DC households depend on rent-controlled units. The DC Housing Modernization and Accessibility Act of 2026 introduced meaningful reforms, lowering the rent-increase cap and creating an automatic freeze during periods of high inflation, which I support. We need to close the loopholes that let landlords petition around those limits, adequately fund the Office of the Tenant Advocate, and protect tenant rights.

- Expand Housing Supply Through Zoning Reform

Keeping large swaths of high-opportunity neighborhoods locked in single-family-only zoning is not proper housing policy; it is the legacy of redlining and restrictive covenants made into law. I support updating DC's Comprehensive Plan to allow duplexes, triplexes, and small apartment buildings in neighborhoods that have used exclusionary zoning to resist inclusion for decades. Good urban design can preserve neighborhood character while opening the door to families currently priced out of the city's highest-opportunity areas.

- Defend Against Federal Cuts

If federal HUD cuts take effect, DC stands to lose over \$22 million in housing funding, with nearly 1,500 people at risk of losing housing. As a Council member, I will work with the Mayor's office and our federal partners to identify every local revenue tool and financing mechanism available to backstop federal losses, and, on record, defend DC residents from outside sources that use housing as a weapon against vulnerable people.

2. Safe Housing: What policies will you advocate for to provide safe housing to people across D.C., including those living in poor rental conditions? A 2022 HUD audit identified 82 violations of federal policy by DCHA, including mold growth, aging infrastructure, boiler rooms with leaks and corrosion, and work order backlogs that allowed dangerous conditions to fester for months or years. An audit of DCHA's approximately 8,000 housing units found that at least 31% required urgent attention: toxic mold, collapsed ceilings, ruined plumbing, vermin. And those are just the units we audited. I will:

- Pass and Strengthen the STRONG Homes Act

Attorney General Schwalb and Councilmember White introduced the STRONG Homes Amendment Act of 2025 to close critical gaps in the Tenant Receivership Act — giving the OAG stronger authority to move faster in the most serious cases where tenants' safety is at immediate risk, including allowing courts to authorize the sale of a property when an owner refuses to make repairs. I will champion the bill on the Council. A landlord who knowingly forces families to live with mold, rat infestations, and broken fire suppression systems while pocketing rent should face receivership. The OAG's 2025 case against one slumlord uncovered more than 1,400 documented housing code violations and more than 7,000

violations of the lead hazard law at properties where tenants were living. The landlord held on to his buildings until the courts forced a sale.

- Fund Enforcement

At one set of properties, 55% of hundreds of assessed violations remained unresolved years after fines were issued. The Department of Buildings is under-resourced for the scale of DC's rental market. I will fight to fund more proactive housing inspectors that are complaint-response and data-driven, targeted inspections of buildings with known violation histories, and staff the Office of Administrative Hearings so that cases move on months. I will also push to close the loophole that allows landlords to treat fines as a negligible cost of doing business by escalating penalties for repeat, chronic violators and stripping licenses from slumlords.

- Protect Tenants Who Speak Up

A tenant reported the building's conditions and was hit with an eviction filing. DC has anti-retaliation protections on the books, but tenants who can't afford a lawyer can't enforce them. I will push to adequately fund the Office of the Tenant Advocate, expand DC's right-to-counsel program in housing court, and create a clear, accessible process for tenants to report retaliatory eviction filings, enabling the OAG to act proactively.

- Reform DCHA

DCHA manages roughly 8,000 public housing units and administers tens of thousands of vouchers for the District's lowest-income residents. It has been in and out of crisis for decades. In 2022, HUD found over 80 issues, including a failure to maintain livable conditions and an extremely low occupancy rate despite a long waitlist and empty units sitting uninhabitable while families wait years for housing. I served on the DCHA Board, and reform requires sustained, informed Council oversight with real consequences. I will use every oversight and budget tool available to hold DCHA accountable: mandatory reporting on work order backlogs, timelines for filling vacant rehabilitated units, and meaningful resident representation in governance. Public housing residents deserve a seat at the table.

- Stop the "Renovict" Pipeline

Some DC developers have built an explicit business strategy around acquiring rent-controlled buildings, accumulating code violations, and using buyouts and selective enforcement to push out long-term tenants, then flipping the units to market rate. I will push to strengthen enforcement of the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act so that tenants have a real chance to buy their buildings before they're flipped, close loopholes in voluntary agreements that let developers renegotiate out of rent-control obligations, and ensure the Council does not pass legislation that makes it easier to displace tenants in the name of "rebalancing".

- Lead Paint and Environmental Hazards Are Not Optional

Children in DC's public and private rental housing continue to be exposed to lead paint and mold. These are public health emergencies with lifelong consequences. I will push to fund proactive lead and mold remediation programs for lower-income rental units, strengthen disclosure requirements at lease signing, and create a publicly searchable database linking landlord names to their full violation histories across all their properties.

3. Shelter Capacity: D.C.'s low-barrier shelters are often at high capacity. Do you think there are enough shelter beds and locations, including spaces for women, men, youth, and LGBTQ+ individuals? If not, what new facilities (low-barrier, non-congregate, etc.) would you advocate for?

No. There are not enough shelter beds for men, women, youth, and especially for LGBTQ+ individuals. Without seasonal overflow, DC has just 335 low-barrier beds for women, 697 for men, and 40 for LGBTQ+ individuals. More beds alone will not solve the homelessness issue but insufficient, unsafe, and inaccessible shelters are their own form of harm.

DHS has a plan to raise the number of city-funded low-barrier and specialty beds from 1,216 to 1,773 by the end of 2028 — but that plan includes the closure of the Harriet Tubman Women's Shelter, which served 175 women each night, resulting in a net loss of 35 beds for women. Meanwhile, more than 800 people in DC live on the streets rather than in shelters because many have had experiences in shelters that made the streets feel safer.

I will push the Council to accelerate DHS's shelter expansion timeline, hold it accountable to every promised opening date, and ensure that net bed counts do not decline, especially for women. Women experiencing homelessness are disproportionately survivors of domestic violence; domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness in the District, yet the mayor's proposed budget would cut funding for DV services. The closure of the Harriet Tubman Women's Shelter, a 175-bed facility, was a lifeline for hundreds of women. DC must replace every bed it closes and add more. I will fight those cuts directly and advocate for dedicated, trauma-informed shelter beds for DV survivors, offering a genuine pathway from danger to stability.

People avoid congregate shelters for documented reasons: theft, violence, harassment, rules that force them to surrender pets, and requirements that split couples and families. Furthermore, DC has no pet-friendly shelters, despite a 2024 bill mandating DHS create one; it remains unfunded. I will fund it. I will also push for independent shelter monitoring with real consequences, functioning grievance processes, and staff accountability when residents are harassed or mistreated.

DC recently opened two non-congregate shelters, where residents have semi-private rooms and mixed-gender families or couples can stay together. Access requires a referral and meeting specific qualifications. The most vulnerable people, those who most need the privacy and stability of non-congregate shelter, may not be eligible. Non-congregate housing produces better outcomes. The Aston and the E Street shelter are the right models. I will push to expand non-congregate capacity citywide, streamline the referral process, and invest in transitional non-congregate settings to bridge emergency shelter and permanent housing. Congregate shelter should be a last resort. I will oppose attempts by the administration to roll back the hard-fought prohibition on housing families in congregate settings.

With Casa Ruby gone, only a few shelters specifically tailored to LGBTQ+ youth remain in DC, and the Wanda Alston Foundation reported in October that LGBTQ+ supportive shelters throughout DC were operating at full capacity, even after the organization's recent expansion. There are limited programs specifically for LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness, and there have been reports by residents at one of the remaining programs of sexual harassment and transphobia from staff.

I will fight to fund new LGBTQ+-affirming shelter capacity in DC, genuine safe spaces where staff use correct pronouns, leadership reflects the community served, and trauma-informed, identity-affirming care is the standard. The Wanda Alston Foundation and SMYAL have built that model. The District should be scaling it.

Meanwhile, older adults are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness, with rising costs and fixed incomes from pensions and Social Security putting many at risk of losing their homes. People aged 50 and older have grown from about 10% of the homeless population to half, nationally. DC's shelter system was not designed for aging bodies, chronic health conditions, and the vulnerabilities of older adults. I will push for dedicated senior-appropriate shelter and transitional housing spaces with accessible facilities, medical coordination, and staff trained for the realities of elder homelessness, and for robust prevention programs targeting seniors before they ever reach the shelter door.

If federal HUD cuts take effect, DC stands to lose over \$22 million in funding, with nearly 1,500 people at risk of losing housing. I will use the Council's budget authority and public platform to defend DC's homelessness funding, identify every available local revenue backstop, and make it clear that this Council will not absorb federal cruelty directed at our most vulnerable residents.

4. Encampment Closures: D.C. officials recently said the city “shouldn’t have encampments” and has been closing encampments regularly for the last several years. What is your stance on the city’s encampment engagement policy, and should the city be closing more or fewer encampments? What resources should people be offered during encampment closures?

Street Sense's own reporting shows little correlation between encampment closures and residents getting housed. Few residents accept shelter at closures, and many simply relocate before returning to the same spot. Charles Williams said it plainly to Street Sense last year: "I'm going right back to my same spot. I'll wait for another notice and then come right back. Going back and forth, that's all I can do. Encampment closures are not a housing policy; it's a displacement on a loop that is expensive for the city, traumatic for residents, and completely ineffective at ending homelessness.

DC closed 200 encampments over two years, and in early 2025, Deputy Mayor Turnage testified that the city was loosening its criteria for closure, meaning encampments no longer needed to meet specific health or safety thresholds to be cleared. That expansion of discretionary sweeps, particularly when driven by political pressure from the federal administration rather than genuine public health concerns, is something I will oppose.

Closing encampments to make homelessness less visible is not governance. The city should close fewer encampments and only do so when there is a confirmed, specific, immediate health or safety threat — and only after residents have been offered a genuine alternative.

"Genuine alternative" is the key phrase. Telling someone a shelter bed exists two miles away in a congregate facility is not a genuine alternative for someone who has had their belongings destroyed, been separated from their partner, or experienced violence in that very shelter. The federal takeover in August 2025 forced the city to clear many encampments without prior notice, dispersing residents into smaller and more scattered locations across DC, making it harder for outreach workers to find them, build trust, and eventually connect them to housing. Sweeps don't reduce homelessness.

When closures do occur, and there will be situations involving genuine emergencies, residents must be offered, at a minimum, adequate advance notice of no less than two weeks except in true emergencies; secure, accessible storage for belongings, a real housing or shelter placement, on-site connection to behavioral health and case management services, and an outreach worker who will follow up. Slashing tents and throwing away blankets, as happened to a wheelchair-using resident in Anacostia while she was at the hospital, is the kind of "closure" that destroys any chance of building the trust needed to eventually get someone housed.

DC doesn't always know in advance when federal agencies will close encampments on federal land, and that coordination failure leaves the most vulnerable people in DC exposed to sudden displacement with no city services present. As a Council member, I will push for binding coordination protocols between DMHHS and federal land managers, and I will use every available oversight and public platform to resist using law enforcement to simply scatter people who have nowhere else to go.

The goal is not a city without encampments. The goal is a city without homelessness. Those are not the same thing, and we should stop pretending they are.

5. Vouchers: This year, the mayor's budget proposal does not include any new housing vouchers for people experiencing homelessness. How would you advocate responding to homelessness given the city's limited resources?

Mayor Bowser's FY2027 budget proposes no new Permanent Supportive Housing vouchers, cuts DHS by 7.5%, and slashes the Housing Production Trust Fund to its lowest infusion since 2016. At a moment when DC's homeless population has risen 4.4%, and family homelessness is up 15.8%, I will fight to reverse it.

Studies show that permanent supportive housing lowers public costs by nearly 50% by reducing use of shelters, hospitals, and jails. Cutting PSH vouchers doesn't save money; it shifts costs onto emergency rooms, shelter beds, and law enforcement, while prolonging suffering. The Council must make the case with data.

Before funding anything new, the Council must defend existing PSH vouchers from federal claw-backs and local cuts. Over 9,000 households in permanent housing programs depend on the District's commitment not to return them to homelessness. Letting those households fall is more expensive and crueler than holding the line.

The District should accelerate office-to-residential conversions on publicly owned properties, leverage every dollar of public land value as a subsidy for deeply affordable units, and use the Housing Production Trust Fund strategically for the deepest affordability levels where the gap between what the market produces and what people can afford is widest. When the District owns the land, it doesn't need a voucher to deliver affordability.

I will push the Council to explore new revenue options, including a real property transfer tax on high-value transactions and closing tax loopholes that benefit large commercial property owners, to protect the programs that keep people housed.

The people who lose PSH vouchers don't disappear. They end up in shelters, ERs, and encampments. That is not fiscal responsibility; it is cost-shifting onto the most vulnerable, and the framing that we have no other choice is not acceptable.

6. Stakeholder Input: How have you involved people with lived experience of homelessness in your policymaking, and how will you in the future?

I will... Listen to people who have been ignored by power and then build enough collective force to create the change that needs to happen. The \$15 minimum wage and paid family leave did not happen because advocates filed smart briefs. They happened because low-wage workers missed a paycheck from housing instability, showed up, testified, knocked on doors, and refused to be managed away. My job was to create the conditions for their voices to matter.

When I worked with DCPS to develop community schools, the model was built around a core principle: that families and community members, including those living with poverty and instability, had to be at the table designing the solutions. Community schools work when they are built from the lived reality of the children and families they serve. When they are designed without input, they become another service delivered to people rather than with them.

As an ANC Commissioner, I organized with neighbors — including renters facing displacement by an unlawful developer. The people at the center of that fight were not policy professionals. They were residents who knew their building, knew their rights were being violated, and needed someone who would take their experience seriously as evidence. I did.

As a board member of the DC Housing Authority, I sat in on hearings where DCHA residents testified about mold, broken locks, rats, maintenance requests ignored for months, and conditions that no one should have to live in. Those testimonies should have led to a faster policy change.

- First, I will require lived-experience representation in every housing and homelessness oversight process I am part of.

Meaningful, structured participation on the front end when we are defining the problem, not just being invited to testify after the policy is already written. When the Council holds budget hearings on DHS, DCHA, or emergency shelter, people with direct experience of those systems should be the first witnesses.

- Second: I will support and expand the Peer Case Management Institute. The PCMI, a partnership between DC's Department of Human Services and Howard University's School of Social Work- trains people with lived experience of homelessness to become case managers in the homeless services system, with over 600 people applying for its first cohort. More than half of the first cohort was employed as case managers in the homeless services system. That is what it looks like when lived experience isn't just consulted, it's employed, valued, and paid. The FY2027 budget includes just \$534,000 for the PCMI. I will fight for more. This program should be growing.

- Third: I will push to create a formal Lived Experience Advisory Body. California's Interagency Council on Homelessness added a Lived Experience Advisory Board in 2023. Baltimore created a Lived Experience Advisory Committee. DC's ICH includes homeless and formerly homeless leaders but inclusion in a 19-member body is not the same as

structural power. I will introduce or co-sponsor legislation to create a standing body of people with current or recent lived experience of homelessness, with a seat at the table in every major policy process, shelter planning, voucher reform, budget negotiations, and with staff support and compensation so participation isn't a luxury only available to those who can absorb the cost.

- Fourth: I will make Street Sense and organizations like it a genuine accountability mechanism. The publication Street Sense, written by people experiencing homelessness and reporting on systems that affect them directly, is the kind of first-person accountability that formal advisory structures often fail to produce. As a Council member, I will read it. I will respond to it. And I will hold agencies accountable when Street Sense reports a problem that the DC government claims doesn't exist.

- Fifth: I will bring ward-based listening sessions directly to people. Not just during business hours at the Wilson Building but in shelters, at day service centers, and at drop-in sites. The people most affected by homelessness policy are often the hardest to reach through conventional civic engagement because conventional civic engagement was not designed for them. I will go where people are and bring staff who are empowered to act on the information received.

The organizers I have most respected in my career share a common belief: that the person closest to a problem usually has the clearest insight into the solution. I have tried to live that belief.