



The Caribbean-American Political Action Committee

1015 18th Street, N.W., Suite 200, Washington, D.C., 20036 | 202-349-1498 | www.CaribbeanPac.org

Caribbean-American Political Action Committee (C-PAC) District of Columbia – 2020 Candidate Questionnaire

Please return the completed form via email to cpac.dmv@gmail.com by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, August 27, 2020. Responses will be shared with C-PAC's membership.

Office Sought: DC City Council At Large

Candidate's Name: Mario Cristaldo

Current Occupation: Nonprofit Executive – DC Community Activist

Party: Independent

Campaign contact information: www.mario2020dc.com email: mario2020dc.com

1. What specific actions will you take to improve the well-being of your constituents and improve District services and access for all residents?
 - **Increase the number of real affordable housing up to 72,000 units from 2035**
 - **Amend the Inclusionary Zoning Law to dedicate 30% of the produced units by any housing development in the District of Columbia.**
 - **Establish term limits for all elected officials in the District of Columbia including the Mayor and all members of the DC City Council.**
 - **Create a free duty Zone for the Americans including the Caribbean.**
 - **Provide 100,000 new small and micro business lending funding through local community development banks for new DC small business owners.**
 - **Create public policies to secure high quality education our children and adult learners.**

2. During recent legislative sessions, the D.C. Council advanced B23-0201, a bill to establish a District of Columbia Office of Caribbean Affairs (OCA), which is a long-standing priority of the Caribbean-American Community. Please explain your position on this legislation and whether you will support efforts to staff and fund the proposed office?
 - **Yes, I am in favor creating and staffing such office. This office will increase better communication and relationship between the DC government and the Caribbean community in DC.**
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3. What initiatives did you lead or support that impact Washington, D.C.'s Caribbean-American community?

As a community organizer and nonprofit executive for more than 20 years, I fought and worked for issues such housing development, living wages, community building initiatives and immigrant rights that benefited folks from the Caribbean, Caribbean American and other residents of the DC area. That is the experience I am bringing to DC City Council at this time. I pledge to work with the Caribbean community from day one in the DC City Council.

4. Are you familiar with the status and impact of Caribbean-American owned businesses in your community and throughout Washington, D.C.? How will you support the viability and competitiveness of the City's small, minority, veteran, women, and especially Caribbean-owned businesses? In addition, how will you improve procurement and contract opportunities for these businesses?

- Yes, I am familiar with the struggle and hardship of small business owners. Doctor Oswald Cameron my dentist of many years is one them, he is from Trinidad and Tobago originally. He provides a vital dental service to our communities in DC. Aris and Ramon Compress owners of Los Hermanos Restaurant from Dominican Republic in Columbia Heights are two hard working business owners who provide delicious plates from the Caribbean cuisine to all DC residents. They both are struggling to keep their business competitive and viable during these hard times. All the small business owners are the same. I am committed to work with all of them and other stakeholders for better government services.

5. There are increased concerns regarding violence – especially gun violence – in many parts of the District. What are your proposals to address and stem violence with 21st century tools and policies?

Investing in our communities for public safety purposes is vital for our communities. Here are some of the measures we must do right away:

- 1) Increase the number of community organizers in each of our 131 neighborhoods in the District. Community building initiatives has been an effective tool for public safety and bringing people together.**
- 2) Provide funding to community-based organizations for public safety engagement process including criminal justice, tenant rights organizing, community and police night-outs, health fairs, farmers markets and other activities and events to empower our communities.**



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- 3) **Create a strong campaign against illegal guns and gun control in the District.**
- 4) **Provide funding to national organization such UPO (United Planning Organization to increase their budget on anti-poverty measures including public safety.**
6. How do you propose increasing access to safe, quality, affordable mental and physical health care and services throughout the District of Columbia?

- **One of my priorities is affordable health care for all. The DC government must guarantee that all residents have access to quality mental and physical health care regardless of economic, social and racial status. We need to do much better here in DC.**

7. Unfortunately, the challenges and concerns facing immigrants are increasing at an alarming rate. Do you support comprehensive immigration reform? How do you propose addressing the challenges facing DREAMers, the administration's suspension of temporary protective status for many D.C. residents, and the constant threats facing sanctuary cities?

I do support comprehensive immigration reform 100 %. I have advocated and worked for DREAMers to access higher education at UDC (*this is required at UDC by law today*). We should continue to allow them to work and live their normal lives among us in spite of the Federal Government. DC is a sanctuary city and we must live up to our values.

8. There is growing attention and distress about the significant increase in lawsuits filed against District residents by debt collectors over the last few years. What is your position on the Debt Buying Limitation Amendment Act, which is pending before the D.C. Council's Committee on Business and Economic Development and the Council's Committee of the Whole?

I am in favor of this Amendment Act. Our debt collection laws must provide a fair approach to this issue and I agree with Councilmember Mary Cheh that this amendment will strengthen our current law to benefit all DC residents.

9. What concrete steps will you take to improve the District of Columbia's Public-School system – including facilities and equipment, teacher treatment, relationships with parents, as well as education standards and test scores in all wards of the City?

Improving our school infrastructure is one of my top priorities along with better treatment of our teachers, better communication and relationship with parents of the students in both our public and charter school system. High quality education requires good smart investment in it.



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10. In Washington, D.C., many seniors seek to age in their homes and/or communities. What efforts will you take to improve service accessibility, support for families, and the quality of programs offered to the City's senior citizens

As a Non-profit executive of two senior centers, I know well of all the challenges we are facing with our senior community in DC including Isolation, mental and health care, affordable housing and so for. We need to invest on issues related to affordable housing for seniors, wraparound services, recreational activities, field trips, bilingual interpretation and food security among others. My favorite motto for all of it is: "Senior Matters".

11. What priority issues inspired your candidacy for political office?

- **After many years of community activism and because of the need to add a strong voice for low- and moderate-income individuals and families to the DC City Council, I decided to run for one of the two At Large seats in the November 3 general election. I am asking for your support and your vote. Together we Can - It is time for Change.**

For more information please visit my website at www.mario2020dc.com