

**Office Sought: DC Council At Large**

**Candidate's Name: Marcus Goodwin**

**Current Occupation: Affordable Housing Development**

**Party: Independent**

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1. What specific actions will you take to improve the well-being of your constituents and improve District services and access for all residents?

On the Council, I will focus on bringing a more equitable approach to legislation and supporting vulnerable residents who need help during this pandemic. I would expand the District's Home Purchase Assistance Program, support the production of workforce housing units through the Housing Production Trust Fund, and incentivize the creation of more rent to ownership programs for residents. I will introduce legislation on day one to provide free online college and certificate programs available to DC residents so we all can get the degrees we need to get ahead. I will fight for better Wi-Fi connectivity for all residents to help close the digital divide in the District. I would also invest more resources for mental health, homelessness, and addiction treatment.

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?

If elected, I would support that legislation because we must have a better support structure for our Caribbean-American Community. My wife is Haitian, and I am the son of an immigrant; so I understand many of the struggles that come with moving to America and needing support.

What initiatives did you lead or support that impact Washington, D.C.'s Caribbean-American community?

I spoke at the Palm Collective Protest to demand Congress to give Washington, DC its fair share of federal emergency relief funding and joined many protests to promote police reforms here in DC. I advocated for small businesses relief so our local bars, restaurants can continue to thrive and employ residents who depend on this paycheck. Lastly, I am focused on building new hospitals east of the river and promoting more equity in health care. Black maternal mortality is three times higher than white maternal mortality, we can and must do better.

3. 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?

On my social media and campaign platforms, I have gone out of my way to promote minority and women-owned businesses. We must support small businesses and retain staff so residents don't lose their livelihoods. The biggest expense for businesses like bars, restaurants, and entertainment venues is their rent. That is why I propose a tax abatement, up to 3 months, on rent for small businesses, so that they can afford to continue operating and make our recovery faster once we get back to normal. On the Council, I will continue advocating for minority-owned businesses to make sure that economic gains are equitably distributed in our community, especially for those who have been historically disenfranchised.

4. 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 21<sup>st</sup> century tools and policies?

To reduce violence, we must address the underlying economic and educational causes of crime. I will fight to get more residents the quality education they need to land a good-paying job. Too many kids in our District don't have the opportunities to succeed, and so they often turn to less productive and sometimes dangerous outlets to occupy their time. As the executive director for Run Hope Works, I have worked with at-risk youths to promote athletic activity and gaining vocational skills so they can land a good-paying job upon graduating from the program. I also support increased funding for violence interruption programs.

5. How do you propose increasing access to safe, quality, affordable mental and physical health care and services throughout the District of Columbia?

We must expand both kinds of health care in the District, especially east of the river where many folks don't have access to these kinds of resources. In black communities, have to destigmatize getting mental health help, it will literally save lives. We also need to build additional health care facilities so more residents can access the care they need.

6. 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?

My mother immigrated to this country from Senegal in 1985, so this issue is personal for me. I do support comprehensive immigration reform and I vehemently oppose the current administration's desire to deport DREAMers. I plan to, as best I can, stop the administration's suspension of temporary protective status for residents and try to protect sanctuary cities. If elected, I will do everything in my power to protect immigrants and the American dream they are fighting to obtain.

7. 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 fully support the Act and believe that the methods by which debt collectors coerce money out of debtors is shameful. Residents deserve to be protected from predatory financial institutions like the ones harassing our residents. If elected, I will advocate for more financial literacy for both immigrants and students, so more residents are equipped with the knowledge to address these issues.

8. 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?

What happens outside of the classroom is often just as important as what happens in the classroom. A top priority of mine on the Council will be to rapidly expand after school

programming for all students. Our students should have opportunities to try new things, be challenged, find their passions, and gain lifelong skills. I would have the District partner with our region's largest employers to expand after school programming for high school students that gives them the training and certification, they need to get a good-paying job upon graduation. That's why I believe we need to ensure that all public and charter schools provide students with access to a high-quality education that is well resourced. Classrooms, teachers, textbooks, and technology should be best-in-class.

9. 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?

First, we must prevent senior residents from getting priced out of their homes from quickly inflating property taxes. I would also look to expand our pool of senior caregivers by including them in the workforce development fund housing expansion I mentioned previously and ensuring they are better compensated for the work they do. Lastly, I will vigorously fight back against predatory financial institutions that are looking to take advantage of our senior population and their wealth generated by their housing assets.

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

Initially, was focused on job creation, expanding homeownership opportunities, and closing our education achievement gap. Since COVID, I have had to re-prioritize and focus on keeping vulnerable residents safe, supporting our struggling small businesses and their employees, and making sure our recovery isn't just a return to normal but leads to a more equitable DC where every resident can access the economic opportunities they need to get ahead.