

**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, September 24, 2020. Responses will be shared with C-PAC's membership.

Office Sought: Ward 2 Councilmember

Candidate's Name: Brooke Pinto

Current Occupation: Current Ward 2 Councilmember

Party: Democratic

Campaign contact information (Address, Phone, Fax, Email, Website): 1219 Q St, NW 20009; 336-686-0030; anders@brookepintoforward2.com; www.brookepintoforward2.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?

○ As the Councilmember for Ward 2, I have made the well-being of my constituents my number one priority. When re-elected, I pledge to continue to advocate for increases in affordable housing and oppose gentrification. I will work on keeping streets safe and support much-needed criminal justice reform. I will continue to work with labor organizations and unions to ensure worker's rights are protected, especially in this economic crisis that we find ourselves in. I will support the Maternal Health Care Improvement and Expansion Act of 2019 to improve maternal health care and prioritize common sense public health legislation. In order to improve our transportation system and reduce our impact on the environment, I will guarantee access to public transportation (\$100 stipend, expanding transitways and bus lanes around the city). I'll also continue to champion our public education system and support the Birth-to-Three program while also ensuring appropriate, robust funding of our District public schools.

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?

○ I wholeheartedly support the bill to establish the Office of Caribbean Affairs. I think it's important that the government provides representation and sustained outreach to the members of the Caribbean-American community that is so prominent and important in our District. I would of course be in favor of efforts to staff and fund the proposed and much-needed office.

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

- Since taking office, I have prioritized the Caribbean-American community and plan to continue to do whatever I can to uplift the Caribbean-American community in DC. Earlier this week, I was proud to co-introduce the Local Business Enterprise Clarification Emergency Amendment Act of 2020 to ensure that local businesses within our CBE program are not taken advantage of by out of state firms, an issue that has often affected Caribbean-American and other minority-owned businesses. I have also worked to expand room for strEATeries, that have allowed restaurants to reopen for outdoor dining during the COVID-19 pandemic. Creating an Office of Caribbean Affairs is also something that would help our outreach to Caribbean-American residents in the future.

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?

- Small businesses, including Caribbean-American owned businesses are the engine and pride of our city, and it is imperative we support them in whatever ways we can – especially during this crippling economic and public health crisis. I fully support the implementation of rent control laws for small businesses who have operated in the District for 10 years, as well as allowing small businesses to defer property taxes. I will continue to ensure that legitimate DC businesses are protected and aren't pushed outside by out-of-District businesses that want to take advantage of favorable contracting laws. I will also support the consideration of minority status in granting contract opportunities to further expand opportunities for minority-owned businesses, especially Caribbean-owned businesses. I was proud to co-introduce legislation with Councilmember McDuffie to ensure that our locally owned and minority owned small businesses are given preference in government contracting and grant opportunities.

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?

- I am fully in favor of expanding the Cure the Streets pilot program which has been extremely effective in reducing crime across all wards in the District. I will also invest in common-sense safety measures such as ensuring our streets have adequate lighting and that all of our metro stations are equipped with functioning cameras. I am proud to be supported by Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America and Everytown for

Gun Safety as a 2020 Gun Sense Candidate – I pledge to be a champion of common-sense gun legislation to help reduce gun violence and get guns off of our streets.

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

○ Ensuring access to high-quality, affordable healthcare and education is a top priority of mine. We need to provide reliable options through insurance coverage, but we also need to expand our partnerships with educational and legal service providers. Most often, healthcare issues do not arise in a silo. Our communities should be provided with full-service team coverage. I will also work to ensure that schools are staffed with school-based mental health professionals and have better resources for students with special needs. I commit to improving maternal health care by supporting the Maternal Health Care Improvement and Expansion Act of 2019. I will make sure that we guarantee access to medical facilities, especially with the closure of the last major medical facility east of the Anacostia river. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the underlying issues in our health care system—you can see my COVID-19 resiliency and relief plan here: <https://brookepintoforward2.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19.pdf>.

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 most definitely support comprehensive immigration reform and our community of DREAMers. I will work with the immigrant community to make the DREAM Act federal law, and I will advocate for the extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for El Salvadorans and Hondurans. I am also committed to protecting Washington D.C.’s status as a sanctuary city. Immigrants make our communities stronger, and I am committed to supporting them throughout our city.

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?

○ Current tactics being used by debt collectors are predatory and the Council absolutely has a responsibility to protect our residents and small businesses. This bill is a step in the right direction, so I fully support the Debt Buying Limitation Amendment Act.

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?

- As your Councilmember, I will ensure that the improvements in our Public School system benefit all students, not just those in the wealthiest neighborhoods. This means schools must have adequate funding for core classes and facilities, as well as foreign language, arts, and sports programs. As schools improve, we also must work to combat overcrowding and reduce the teacher to student ratio. We must properly invest in hiring highly trained teachers who plan to remain in DCPS for years to come, not short-term, inexperienced staff members in order to see the results that we want. All schools must have college and career guidance counselors, and we must improve our coordination with social services professionals so we can care for the whole student. DCPS should also avoid an overemphasized focus on standardized testing, but rather ensure that students from all wards are performing at the levels they should.

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?

- In order to support our District's senior population, I will increase the homestead deduction for seniors and plan to re-introduce the Senior Tax Relief Amendment of 2017. It is important for our city to reform our tax laws to ensure that our seniors can age comfortably in their homes and communities. I will also increase affordable housing options and affordable options for community living and long-term care. The medical care system for seniors is convoluted and needs to be changed. I believe in expanding medication delivery services, particularly now with the increased risks associated with COVID-19. Quality senior care goes beyond meeting basic needs: mental health support and recreational activities are crucial.

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

- **Ensuring affordable housing:** Our city has been facing a housing crisis for the last decade. Long-time DC residents, many of whom are minorities, are being pushed out, and that is shameful. Affordable housing is a priority and we also must ensure that we have strong protections for tenants and legal representation for those who are mistreated. I also support Housing First policies to help reduce homelessness in the District.

- **Supporting small businesses:** We need to ensure that our small businesses have what they need to recover from rising rent prices, increased regulation and a reduction in revenue.

- **Criminal justice reform:** Reforming the lifespan of the system, from increasing after school programming to shifting enforcement responsibilities out of MPD to community-based policing to updating our expungement laws and ensuring that all of our residents are treated with respect and dignity.