



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, March 5, 2020. Responses will be shared with C-PAC's membership.

Office Sought: Ward 4 Councilmember
Candidate's Name: Brandon Todd
Current Occupation: Ward 4 Councilmember
Party: Democrat

Campaign contact information:

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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?

The most important aspect of my job is responding to the needs and concerns of the residents of Ward 4. By always maintaining open lines of communication, I am able to hear directly from residents what their immediate concerns are. Public safety is of course a top priority of mine. Nothing is more critical to the day-to-day well-being of residents than their safety and security. To that end, I am working hand-in-hand with the Metropolitan Police Department, convening the Ward 4 Public Safety Task Force, convening weekly public safety walks, introducing legislation to deter bad acting property owners such as my nuisance bill, and coordinating efforts among District agencies to ensure we are utilizing a government wide approach.

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 was proud to introduce that legislation, so I fully support it. The bill was referred to the Committee on Government Operations, for which I serve as Chairman. The Committee held a hearing and voted the bill out of Committee and to the full Council for a vote. I championed the legislation, and now, it has been unanimously passed and awaits the Mayor's signature. In my Office's budget letter addressed to the Mayor, I requested funding for the proposed Office



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and will work with the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs to ensure that the Office is funded and staffed appropriately.

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

As mentioned in the previous question, I introduced B23-0201 and secured its passage. I believe the newly created Office of Caribbean Affairs will prove to be a great boon to the District's Caribbean community. As Ward 4 Councilmember, I have also met with members of the Mayor's Advisory Commission on Caribbean Community Affairs to discuss the issues most pressing to the District's Caribbean community. Based on our meetings and discussions, to better serve the Caribbean community, I established the Ward 4 Advisory Committee on Caribbean Affairs. This advisory committee will serve to make recommendations and/or provide key information and materials to me and my staff.

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?

I am very familiar with the status and impact of Caribbean-American owned businesses in Ward 4 and throughout the District. These businesses have supported Ward 4 neighborhoods and communities in the District for decades. These businesses have created jobs and added value to the District's economy. They also add culture and vibrancy.

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?

Keeping our neighborhoods and streets safe is my top priority. I have and will continue to push for more resources in Ward 4. For example, after the latest instance of gun violence in our community, I spoke with the Chief of Police Peter Newsham, the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, the Office on Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE), and the City Administrator, to get additional patrols, more resource officers in Ward 4 schools, and additional overtime for MPD specialized units, such as NSID + gun recovery. NSID, the Narcotics and Special Investigations Division, is MPD's primary unit responsible for investigating firearms trafficking offenses, among other crimes. The Gun Recovery Unit, under NSID, conducts firearms interdiction operations to recover illegal guns in the District of Columbia. This unit also has detectives who investigate and track the origins of firearms recovered. These detectives focus on identifying and apprehending illegal gun traffickers.



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Long term, I am regularly convening the Ward 4 Public Safety Task Force to ensure the government is properly coordinating efforts and directing resources in the most efficient manner. The Task Force includes: Deputy Mayor of Public Safety Kevin Donahue, Fourth District Commander Randy Griffin of MPD, the Chief Information Officer from the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), Director Chris Geldart from the Department of Public Works (DPW), and representatives the Department of Employment Services (DOES), the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE), the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS), the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Department of Transportation (DDOT), the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), and the United States Attorney's Office (USAO) for the District of Columbia. Each agency has an important role to play in ensuring our safety and well-being. The Ward 4 Public Safety Advisory Committee that I created will also continue to look at legislative solutions and policy initiatives to improve safety.

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

First, keeping our hospitals and health clinics in state-of-the-art shape will allow residents to get the best healthcare possible. We must continue to make investments in our hospitals. Being able to see a doctor should not just be reserved for the rich. All residents must be able to access a doctor and receive adequate health care.

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?

Ward 4 has one of the highest immigrant populations in the District. As Chairperson of the Committee on Government Operations, I have oversight over the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs, which includes the Mayor's Office on African Affairs, the Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, and the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs. I can firmly state that no other Councilmember and/or candidate has more insight and knowledge into the needs of the District's immigrant community.

On February 18, 2020, I introduced PR23-0696, the Sense of the Council Opposing Implementation of Public Charge Rule Resolution of 2020, to show the District's commitment to supporting and protecting immigrants in Washington, DC.



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I support comprehensive immigration reform that is fair and equitable. I support immigration reform provides a path to citizenship, does not invade privacy rights, protects workers from workplace abuse and wage theft, bans racial profiling, and keeps families together.

Under this current Presidential administration, Dreamers face many challenges, and the threat of deportation is terrible. I support any measure to keep Dreamers in the United States and in school.

I believe that the District should remain a sanctuary city. All people have value. The District prides itself on inclusivity. I welcome and celebrate immigrants and their role in our City's history and in the greater fabric and history of the United States.

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 against all predatory debt collection practices. No District resident should be harassed, debased, or contacted during unreasonable hours. Debt collection lawsuits can be a burden on our judicial system, and too often, increases the financial strain on the resident who owes the debt. I look forward to a hearing being scheduled on the Debt Buying Limitation Amendment Act, and hearing from public witnesses and experts on how the legislation can benefit the District.

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?

The students of today are our leaders of tomorrow. It is critical that we provide our schools, students, and teachers with every resource to be successful. In my 5 years on the Council, I have fought for record investments in our schools. These investments have led to complete modernizations of schools such as Coolidge, Roosevelt and many others. At Shepherd Park Elementary, for example, I secured \$13.4 million for upgrades including: a regulation-sized gymnasium, a full cooking kitchen and cafeteria space, multipurpose room, and fitness center for use by elementary students and the community. I have also fought to enhance STEM in our schools, by fighting for STEM Talent Pipeline Grants, such as the one Whittier Education Campus was recently nominated for. I have increased the number of dual language programs in our schools, as our society is becoming more and more diverse each day.



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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?

I am intently focused on the needs of our seniors. After all, they are the lifeblood of our communities and we owe them a debt of gratitude. I have fought to secure additional funding for programs such as the Safe at Home program, which helped countless Ward 4 seniors make upgrades to their homes to allow them to age in place. I have also created programs legislatively that have helped our seniors, such as the Hearing Aid Assistance Program, or the Senior Dental Program, which provides comprehensive dental care, outreach, oral health education, and care coordination to seniors who reside in District of Columbia with an adjusted gross income of less than \$100,000. I am extremely proud for all we were able to accomplish for our seniors.

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

- More resources for public education
- Protecting all immigrants in the District
- Increase employment opportunities
- Affordable housing