

Stand Up! for Democracy in DC (Free DC) Candidate Questionnaire June 19 2018 Democratic Primary

Responses by Andria Thomas, candidate for Shadow Senator

1. On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being highest) how important do you think DC Statehood is and why?

5. Statehood is the most important issue facing DC residents. Every issue we need to solve and every injustice we seek to end are all rooted in the racist policies that deny us Statehood. We cannot hope to deliver on the promise of full equality until we are no longer second-class citizens in our own country. Statehood will allow us the budgetary and legislative autonomy to create programs to address affordable housing, ensure our gun laws keep our residents safe, and empower local residents to make decisions about their own community.

2. Name 3 specific things you have done to improve the achievement of DC Statehood?

1. My work in creating Resist and Rise (now Indivisible Capitol Hill) has brought new activists and volunteers into the fight for Statehood.
2. I organized a "Kids Lobby Day" which brought more than 100 people to the United States Senate and added co-sponsors to the Senate Statehood Bill, while demonstrating the power of collaborating with community groups across the city.
3. I have been an active member of the Statehood Coalition. My work has increased the social media reach of the members of the Coalition and brought more attention to the effort.

3. If elected, what are 3 specific things you will do to advance the DC Statehood Movement?

1. The position of Shadow Senator should serve as a strong advocate for Statehood, not as an advocate for the Shadow Senator. I will spend my time pushing the District Government to increase their commitment to Statehood. Council members should be fully participating in Statehood events and raising the visibility of Statehood to their constituents. Government agencies should be examining their work for opportunities to incorporate Statehood messaging. Rules and regulations of the District should look for ways to require those who profit from business in the District also invest in the equality of the residents of the District.
2. I will work to gain new allies to Statehood nationally, and to increase collaboration among the existing Statehood groups. For example, each of the organizations working on issues of civil rights and core democratic rights – such as combatting voter suppression – is a potentially ally. And each of the organizations working on Statehood has an important part to play. I will work to strengthen the Statehood Coalition, increase participation in the Coalition from elected officials and all our partners, and broaden the membership of the Coalition. We have to bring more people into the effort.

3. I will do outreach in a targeted way across the United States to have an impact on the needed votes in Congress. There are opportunities all over the US to inform constituents and build the influence we need. The Shadow Senator's limited resources should be spent influencing the United States Congress in a strategic way.

4. Would you risk arrest in support of DC Statehood? Why or why not?

If the tactic that would lead to arrest was aligned with a strategy, yes. Civil disobedience, when used as part of an overall strategy, is a compelling and effective tactic but should not serve as a stand-alone activity.

5. Should the DC Statehood Delegation be paid for their work? Why or why not?

Too much time has been spent on this subject and too many tensions built among people who should be allies. The Statehood Delegation should, as Shadow Delegations have in other statehood efforts, be paid for their work on Statehood. However, the Shadow Delegation should not be advocating for this. It is a massive conflict of interest to use a public office to advocate for personal enrichment.

6. What do you rank as the most important aspect of a lack of DC Statehood and why?

- a. **No voting representation in the House or the Senate of the United States Congress;**
- b. **Congress' ability to veto or change our local budget;**
- c. **Congress' ability to veto or change our local laws;**
- d. **Our inability to appoint or elect our local judges**

And there are many other important aspects as well. This request is akin to asking me to choose my favorite child. Each of these are tightly inter-woven and impact each of the 700,000 residents of the District differently: it is impossible to choose. What is true is that Statehood is the cleanest and most permanent way to address each of these injustices. We don't need to prioritize or rank any of them, as we can fix all of them at the same time.