



VOTER GUIDE

DC GENERAL ELECTION 2014

INTRODUCTION

The Jews United for Justice Campaign Fund mobilizes the Jewish communities of Greater Washington to advance campaigns for social justice and support progressive candidates for office.

For this General Election, we undertook an extensive process that allowed our leaders and activists to carefully examine what each of the candidates for Mayor, City Council, and Attorney General stand for and assess how effective they might be in promoting our social justice agenda.

We convened an endorsement committee of six leaders from our membership and board. We sent a detailed questionnaire to the candidates for At Large council seats, mayor and attorney general. The committee then conducted lengthy candidate interviews and consulted with a variety of partners and allies in the progressive advocacy community.

We make these recommendations in the hope that our members will be able to make a difference at the ballot box and an even bigger impact on the policy agenda when the new DC Council convenes next year. We used three core criteria to guide our decision process: the candidates had to closely align with our agenda for social and economic justice, show high ethical standards, and have a real chance of winning.

Learn more about the JUFJ Campaign Fund and our endorsements process at www.jufjcampaignfund.org

Paid for by JUFJ Campaign Fund, 1633 Connecticut Ave, NW Washington, DC 20009. Lilah Pomerance, Treasurer. A copy of our report is filed with the Director of Campaign Finance of the District of Columbia Board of Elections.

Mayoral Race: No Endorsement

No candidate met our criteria of alignment with our social and economic justice agenda, electability, and high ethical standards.



MURIEL BOWSER
murielformayor.com

In her eight years as Ward 4 councilmember, Councilmember Bowser has a mixed record on progressive issues. On our candidate questionnaire, she expressed support for raising the tipped minimum wage to 70% of the minimum wage, noted her openness to overseeing a complete overhaul of the Department of Employment Services to make it more effective in enforcing legislation that protects workers, and supported a top tax bracket that would start at \$250,000.

However, her record is inconsistent. Her primary legislative achievement on the council is shepherding a package of needed ethics reforms, though she chose not to address the campaign finance issues in her proposal. She continues to oppose campaign finance reform efforts, opposing a ban on corporate contributions and remaining non-committal to public

financing of elections. She has also consistently voted against proposals to make DC's income tax more progressive.

More recently, at a time when a coalition of her colleagues on the Council proposed a variety of bills to increase the minimum wage, she instead proposed studying the impact of an increase. She eventually supported the final passage of the minimum wage and paid sick days bills. In her current tenure as chair of the Committee on Economic Development she has been criticized by housing advocates for not proposing significant legislation to address the city's affordable housing crisis.

Bowser regularly chooses to study issues or withhold her support until it is clear a majority of her colleagues are ready to act, suggesting a cautious, consensus-seeking leadership style.



DAVID CATANIA
davidcatania.org

David Catania was originally elected as an At Large member of the Council in 1997 as a Republican, and was the first openly gay member of the Council. Running as an Independent since 2004, Catania has been both champion and lead opposition to many progressive efforts. He has not provided the Campaign Fund a candidate questionnaire, though his 100+ page campaign platform offers many policy positions. Catania is the only Mayoral candidate to support the creation of a universal Paid Family Leave program in DC to ensure that all workers can afford to stay home with the birth of a child or to care for sick loved ones.

Catania has also spearheaded a number of critical progressive efforts in DC, including winning Marriage Equality in DC in 2009, the expansion of the DC Healthcare Alliance program, which cut the number of uninsured

DC residents in half before the creation of the Affordable Care Act, and for the first time allocating additional resources for schools based on the number of at-risk students they serve.

However, Catania was among the most vocal opponents of making DC's tax system more progressive and he has consistently voted against funding for safety-net services. He also voted against the Large Retailer Accountability Act and against the original Paid Sick Days legislation in 2008. Last year, he introduced legislation that would have punished school truancy by sending parents to jail, a provision he later withdrew but only after widespread opposition.

Catania has a long reputation of passionately, and some would say aggressively, staking out his political positions, from which he is difficult to move.



CAROL SCHWARTZ
carolfordc.org

Carol Schwartz has been an elected leader in the District on and off since 1974. She spent a decade as a member of the DC Board of Education before serving as a Republican on the DC Council for four terms. In her response to our questionnaire, she committed to addressing the affordable housing crisis by pledging \$150 million a year to the Housing Production Trust Fund – 50% more funding than either Bowser or Catania have offered. Schwartz also points to the passage of the 2008 Paid Sick Days legislation as her signature achievement on the Council.

As the chair of the committee, she faced significant opposition from the business community and Chamber of Commerce for her support of the effort, and many attribute her subse-

quent defeat in the Republican primary to her support of Paid Sick Days.

Nevertheless, she also opposes many progressive priorities. For instance, in her candidate questionnaire, she opposed the creation of a universal paid family leave program in DC. She also spent many of her years on the council calling for tax cuts for DC's wealthiest residents, and continues to believe the driving concern for DC's tax policy should be further income tax cuts for top earners rather than creating a progressive tax system to fund the core programs needed for our city.

In her four terms on the City Council, Schwartz proved an astute advocate for her chosen priorities, able to build majority support for measures through compromise.

Council At-Large: Silverman and Hagler

This November, DC voters will go to the polls to elect two At-Large councilmembers. Incumbent Councilmember Anita Bonds (Democrat) is up for reelection, and since declaring his run for mayor, Councilmember David Catania (Independent) vacated his seat. Due to District laws governing the make-up of the city council, Councilmember Catania's seat is reserved for a non-majority party candidate, or in this case, a non-Democrat. As the Democratic incumbent, Councilmember Bonds is heavily favored to win reelection; however, both her seat and that of Councilmember Catania could be filled by non-Democratic candidates.

You can cast two votes in the At-Large race.

The endorsement team was heartened to see so many progressive and qualified candidates. The field is exceptionally crowded. Even so, many of the candidates are seasoned progressive activists with solid records working on a variety of local issues. We hope to see these types of candidates running in future elections.

Several other significant candidates in the race include Eugene Puryear, Anita Bonds, Robert White, and Khalid Pitts:

- **Eugene Puryear** is a dedicated and dynamic activist with a significant track record of working for social justice in DC, most recently working with formerly incarcerated citizens. He is a strong progressive candidate, but we were more impressed with Silverman's and Hagler's blend of pragmatism and longtime experience.
- **Anita Bonds**, the heavily favored incumbent in the race, has been a reliable vote on many of the issues that JUFJ works on, but has yet to provide substantial progressive leadership.
- **Robert White**, a former Legislative Counsel for Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, has worked on a mix of local and national issues. Though he would support much of the Campaign Fund's agenda, his answers and priorities suggest he is more likely to be a moderate than a progressive.
- **Khalid Pitts** has extensive experience working on addressing health disparities in the District's schools and jails, and worked for many years at the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Unfortunately, though Pitts has been living in the city for two decades, he only registered to vote in DC last year, raising questions about his experience with and immersion in the issues overseen by the DC Council.

Vote for Both:



ELISSA SILVERMAN
elissa2014.com

Elissa Silverman, a former investigative journalist with a decade of experience covering the DC Council, JUFJ Jeremiah Fellow, Heschel Award honoree, and anti-poverty advocate, has been a central leader in the struggles for a higher minimum wage, expanded access to paid sick days, and a fairer tax system. She has also spearheaded local efforts to reduce the influence of money in politics. With the help of an energized grassroots base including many JUFJers, Silverman placed a close second in the 2013 special election for an At Large seat on the DC Council. Again this year she is running a strong, people-powered campaign free from corporate contributions.



REV. GRAYLAN HAGLER
haglerfordc.net

Reverend Graylan Hagler is a lifelong activist with decades of experience fighting for social justice in the District. He has led battles to preserve and expand affordable housing, revitalize public housing, expose predatory payday lending practices, and most recently, has been a prophetic voice supporting the Large Retailer Accountability Act (the Walmart minimum wage Bill) and the minimum wage increase.

Both Silverman and Hagler will work hard to create a more socially and economically just city. Both have been strong and effective allies in JUFJ's recent victories and will provide critically needed leadership to address our city's most pressing issues like the affordable housing and the homelessness crisis, the creation of good paying jobs, and accountability and transparency.

Attorney General: Edward “Smitty” Smith

This will be the first time the District elects an Attorney General. The Attorney General has a powerful role in shaping the District by:

- Defending the city against litigation (from simple slip and falls to civil rights violations)
- Prosecuting all allegations against juveniles. This means the AG has the discretion on how they pursue cases and when youth are eligible for diversion programs that keep them out of the juvenile justice system
- Protecting families & children by prosecuting child support, abuse, and neglect cases
- Pursuing consumer protection cases (eg. seeking damages from big tobacco or for improper lending practices)

It is important to note that because of DC’s second-class status as a federal district, the Attorney General does not control adult felony prosecutions – those are led by the US Attorney’s Office.



EDWARD “SMITTY” SMITH
smittyforag.com

Edward “Smitty” Smith is a third generation Washingtonian who combines solid management experience with a passion for social justice and public service. As Attorney General, he would champion juvenile justice reforms, protect District residents and consumers from predatory lenders and other unscrupulous businesses, and fight for DC autonomy and representation. He would also be careful to establish an office that is fully independent from the Mayor – seeking collaboration and consensus where possible, but not being afraid to break with the Mayor or Council when the public interest calls for it.

There is an unusually strong field of candidates. Smitty rose above the rest for his combination of a clear progressive agenda, the experience needed to manage a complex agency, and running a professional campaign. In the August campaign finance report he had raised more money and from more donors than all his competitors combined.

Three of the other candidates also have clear and strong progressive platforms, but none have the experience leading effective government agencies nor the campaign infrastructure that Smitty has built. Lorie Masters is a highly accomplished lawyer, with years of experience and a particularly strong record of working on DC Voting Rights. Lateefah Williams has worked to protect workers’ rights and served as a leader in DC’s LGBT community as former chair of the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club. Paul Zukerberg has spent the past two years single-handedly winning the right for DC residents to actually get to vote for an Attorney General this fall. He also used his candidacy in last year’s At-Large race to build critical momentum for addressing the racial disparity in drug arrests by decriminalizing marijuana possession. While Karl Racine has a strong resume that involves working in the Clinton White House and becoming the first African American managing partner of a top-100 law firm, he has been much more reticent to articulate his agenda if elected.

Council Chair: **Phil Mendelson**



For Council Chair, the JUFJ Campaign Fund endorses [Phil Mendelson](#). In his 15 years on the council he has consistently stood with us on the issues that matter most. Mendelson has presided over one of the most progressive and effective councils in recent memory, raising the minimum wage, expanding paid sick days protections, combatting wage theft, helping formerly incarcerated citizens get jobs, and cutting taxes for working- and middle-class DC residents.

Ward 1: **Brianne Nadeau**



Brianne Nadeau has proven herself as an able crusader for social justice issues while serving as an ANC commissioner, working for a US Congressman from Baltimore, advising Jewish organizations on communications strategy, and as a leader and board member of JUFJ. She is a young, dynamic, and progressive leader, ready to tackle our city's challenges.

Ward 3: **Mary Cheh**



The JUFJ Campaign Fund endorses [Mary Cheh](#), who is running unopposed. While we have not always agreed with Cheh on every issue, she is a thoughtful legislator and is always willing to hear our side of the argument. We have been impressed with her leadership on the tipped minimum wage and her early support for the 2013 minimum wage increase and paid sick days bills.

Ward 5: **Kenyan McDuffie**



We endorse [Kenyan McDuffie](#)'s reelection campaign. While McDuffie is new to the Council, he really impressed the interview committee with his commitment to our core social justice issues and his grasp of how to move legislation through the council. McDuffie entered office in the wake of an ethics scandal that forced out his predecessor. A former attorney for the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, he has brought a strong program of ethics reform to the Council. He has championed an impressive package of campaign finance reform, in addition to several affordable housing bills that we believe will greatly benefit low and middle income families in the District.

Ward 6: **Charles Allen**



The JUFJ Campaign Fund proudly endorses our longtime Council ally [Charles Allen](#) for the Ward 6 council seat. We have worked closely with Charles, who has played a central role in shepherding our paid sick days legislative agenda through the Council as Councilmember Tommy Well's chief of staff. We believe that his combination of expertise and infectious optimism make Charles a strong representative for Ward 6 and for social justice.

ENDORSEMENTS

Mayor: No Endorsement

please see inside for analysis

Attorney General: Edward “Smitty” Smith

At Large: Elissa Silverman and Graylan Hagler

Council Chair: Phil Mendelson

Ward 1: Brianne Nadeau

Ward 3: Mary Cheh

Ward 5: Kenyan McDuffie

Ward 6: Charles Allen

The Jews United For Justice Campaign Fund mobilizes the Jewish community of Greater Washington to advance grassroots campaigns for social justice and support progressive candidates for office.

Our criteria for endorsement:

**Social and Economic Justice
Agenda
High Ethical Standards
Electability**

DC elections are decided by razor-thin margins:
your vote really matters.

The District of Columbia offers
same-day voter registration and early voting.
Register and find your polling place:

jufj.turbovote.org