

Ryan L. Jones

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Q1

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Q2

District's lawyer

In your view, is the attorney general more appropriately thought of as the District's lawyer or the fourth branch of government?

Q3

Please explain your choice, resisting the urge to say you would balance the two. We would like to know why you believe your selection is the attorney general's primary mandate.

The Office of Attorney General is an independent agency that is charged with defending the District government, advising the agencies and providing public advocacy to District residents, among other essential functions.

This position is the Chief Legal Officer to the District that provides counsel and oversight to Council and the Mayor as an internal function of District government, not another branch of government.

Q4

Yes

Do you think the District should build more housing?

Q5

The attorney general's office announced last year its plans to advocate for the public interest in zoning and development cases in the District. The current attorney general's interpretation of the public interest in land use has not been defined or, if it has, it has not been shared with the public. How do you define the public interest in land use?

The public interest in land use is a balance of the interests of residents, safety, the environment, other substantive factors based on the location, and the best use for an overall high return on investment made.

Q6

The attorney general's office also announced its plans to support ANCs, in particular, in development decisions made by the zoning commission or Board of Zoning Adjustment. When would you defend the District, and when would you support ANCs?

This question draws a line that is potentially inaccurate in reality. However, purely based on the job description, I would defend the District. But, supporting the ANCs can also be construed as defending the District. I would always defend the District and that may look like supporting the ANCs. ANCs need legal support often when negotiating contracts and other deals, and OAG needs to provide that support.

Q7

Yes

Mayor Muriel Bowser has established a housing-production target for the District (12,000 units by 2025) and broken that target down into, most notably, publicly subsidized, means-tested housing units that need to be produced per planning area. However, there are no consequences for the District if it fails to reach this target or for residents who stymie, through protest or lawsuit, the ability of the District to reach this target. Are you committed to the production of the fair share of publicly subsidized units per planning area?

Q8

If you are committed to the production of the fair share of publicly subsidized, means-tested housing units per planning area, how will you enforce that? If there are currently no legal mechanisms by which production targets can be enforced, what will you attempt to implement to do so? If you are not committed to the production of the fair share of publicly subsidized housing units per planning area, please write, "I am not committed to the production of the fair share of publicly subsidized, means-tested housing units per planning area."

Public action would need to be taken against the District by an affected resident(s). I would advise the Mayor and Council to adhere to its promises to the District and its residents to avoid litigation.

Holding the government accountable against itself is a tough measure which is not often or expressly found in code, but making clearer enforcement legislation is a good way to create a mechanism, which OAG can do as a top official on the way code is drafted to be enacted.

Q9

No

The Home Rule Act specifies that municipal planning is the duty of the mayor, not the D.C. Council (page 13). Some zoning commissioners have expressed so much interest in hearing on-the-record support from councilmembers for planned unit developments, however, that the commission's approval of PUDs that are not in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan is now perceived as contingent on support from councilmembers. Do you believe this to be a problem?

Q10

If you do believe that it is a problem that the zoning commission's approval of PUDs that are not in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan is now perceived as contingent on support from councilmembers, what will you do to remediate that? If you do not believe this is a problem, please write, "I do not believe this is a problem."

"I do not believe this is a problem"
But I cannot know from the outside.

Q11

No

Do you think inducing residents and visitors to drive less should be an explicit policy goal of the District?

Q12

No

In 2018, the D.C. Council voted to decriminalize fare evasion in the District over objections from Mayor Bowser, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Metro Transit Police Department, and the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689. Should fare evasion be decriminalized?

Q13

No

Should the WMATA Board of Directors to abolish its penalties for fare evasion?

Q14

No

Will you work to ensure the attorneys general in Maryland and Virginia, and their subordinates, suspend prosecution of fare evasion offenses?

Q15

What powers does the attorney general have to reduce dangerous behavior by drivers on the District's roads? What will you do to ensure that no one is killed by a driver, especially by a driver who has demonstrated their failure to comply with traffic laws through unpaid parking and driving violations?

Our current system of deterrence for dangerous driving is not working. All matters must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and too many of the poor drivers our from out of state, with no enforcement of our fines to deter them from their home state.

- 1) we must boot/tow out of state drivers with 3 or more unpaid DC tickets.
- 2) We must incentivize good driving behavior with a tax credit and elimination of fines for not getting camera or parking tickets over a period of time.

Q16

Delivery companies notoriously violate the District's parking laws, treating tickets as a business expense and negotiating batch discounts with the District, thereby ensuring that poor and unsafe behavior on their employees' parts will be excused. As attorney general, what will you do to force delivery companies to ensure that their drivers obey traffic laws?

- 1) We must have our police officers move those idle vehicles along, as they are traffic and safety hazards.
- 2) We need to amend the delivery zones and times for deliveries, to comport with a better function of our society. i.e. No deliveries during rush hour; no stopping on certain major thoroughfares.

Q17

The District's automated traffic enforcement program cannot meaningfully enforce consequences for unsafe driving upon Maryland and Virginia residents, as the District does not have any reciprocity agreement with those states. As attorney general, what will you do to facilitate those agreements, and what will you do to implement them?

As mentioned above, we should tow/boot those cars, when found on dc streets with more than 3-5 outstanding tickets, or a value above a certain amount owed to the district, whichever is the higher of the two options.

Q18

Fines and fees for unsafe driving disproportionately harm low-income drivers and drivers of color. GGWash has, in the past, proposed that the District switch from fines to points on a drivers' license to emphasize that automated enforcement is not about revenue or surveillance, but about ensuring that drivers are behaving safely and responsibly. Do you support changing the consequences of an automated ticket program from fines to points and, if so, how would you make that change law?

The cameras are too sensitive and/or harsh. And they don't deter bad driving. People learn where they are and change their driving around those cameras, which can lead to safety issues.

We need more realistic speeds and enhancements for violators who cause harm. If there is no harm we should not punish.

Q19

The District's goal to be carbon-free by 2050 requires most of the reduction of its transportation emissions to come from residents turning existing single-occupancy vehicle trips into transit, walking, and biking trips. Please describe at least one trip you currently take by car that you can commit to taking on foot, by bus, by train, or by bike instead.

I can walk to a grocery store, as good exercise too. But having one close is a benefit we don't all enjoy, and we don't all enjoy safe neighborhoods to do that either.

I can commit to biking to visit friends and family in nearby neighborhoods as well.

I can commit to taking a train to the office on certain days.
