



**D.C. Latino Caucus Candidate
Questionnaire
Bryan Weaver
Ward One Council Candidate**

1) Discuss what you have done or will do to work collaboratively with other elected officials on issues important to the Latino community:

As husband to a Colombian-born, long-time D.C. resident, and father to two Latino children, I have always felt a special kinship with the Latino community in D.C. I started my nonprofit in Ward One, which takes teenagers — largely from the Ward — to the highlands of Guatemala for five weeks every summer for leadership development, community building and Spanish immersion. In addition, the program offers scholarships for Mayan Indigenous youth in rural Guatemala to attend high school.

As an eight year ANC Commissioner in Adams Morgan, home to many Latino residents, I have fought tirelessly on many fronts for not only the Latino residents in Adams Morgan but for Latinos across Ward One and indeed the District of Columbia. During my tenure, I have advocated for fair housing laws, especially the abolishment of the 95-5 rule which in its heyday, deprived many Latino families who were decades-long Adams Morgan residents, of their right of first refusal when their landlord was ready to sell to the highest bidder. I have helped form tenant associations in largely Latino buildings and even organized the clean-up of buildings where many Latino families lived that were being neglected by the landlord.

I have gone to bat for many Latino small business owners and restaurant owners to ensure they get fair treatment from D.C. regulatory agencies, and to help them navigate the myriad of tangled requirements that often keep business owners from understanding the rules and regulations they are required to abide by in the District of Columbia.

In addition to businesses, I have worked with a number of nonprofit agencies to ensure they are able to operate and offer their services to Ward One Latino constituents who are in the most need of guidance on many fronts including education, health care, business empowerment, housing, etc. al. (I moved the ANC 1C meetings from the Third District Police Headquarters to Mary's Center, I was instrumental in helping Mi Tierra gain the permits and get everything they needed to operate their weekend outdoor Latino market...).

In terms of legislation, I was the first public elected official to come out strongly, aggressively and publicly against the Secure Communities initiative that Police Chief Lanier is considering. It is a perhaps well-intended but misguided approach to enforcement that has entrapped and ensnared many a legal immigrant not just here in DC but nationwide. We can do better in our approach to dealing with criminal undocumented immigrants and I look forward to working with the Council of the District of Columbia to do just that.

2) Describe what your policy agenda would be, including ways you would improve the economic and social condition of Latinos and their families, if elected:

If elected, I would work closely with the Council of the District of Columbia and with community leaders and activists to enact an economic recovery agenda that puts Latinos to work, including tax incentives and tax abatements to Latino small businesses that are the engines of economic growth in our communities. I also would ensure Latino children and mothers have the resources necessary to gain early childhood education (universal Pre-K 3 and 4 are prime examples of what we can afford all D.C. communities that gives all our children a great head start).

I would continue my focus on successful leadership development and youth engagement initiatives to ensure Latino youth stay off the streets, minimize their initiation in gang activities, and are put on to career path programs that serve as a way out of poverty and into educational or vocational programs that lead to job and economic security. In years past, I worked with the Yo program — part of the Latin American Youth Center — to help local Latino students who possibly aren't college-bound get the technical training they need to find the right careers, such as firefighting. The District of Columbia needs more programs like this not only just for Latino youth, but all District youth.

Also if elected, I would like to work with other members of the Council to consider the possibility of implementing pro-immigrant programs in D.C. — programs that are successful in other areas of country — such as making D.C. a sanctuary city for undocumented immigrants and considering the possibility of allowing legal immigrants to vote in local elections.

3) What is your position on DC implementing the secure community program, and what is your position on comprehensive immigration reform:

As I mentioned in question number 1, I was the first D.C. elected official to come out publicly, strongly and unequivocally against the Secure Communities initiative (the ANC IC resolution I authored is attached). I believe we can do better than implement a program that has major flaws including ensnaring innocent, legal immigrants who get caught up in the broad web that is cast under this initiative.

I firmly believe that if we are able to meet our obligation of passing Comprehensive Immigration Reform at the federal level, flawed programs such as the Secure Communities program, and misguided approaches such as AZ 1070, will not be enacted. There is no question that our immigration system is broken and is badly in need of repair. I believe we need reform that includes tough enforcement mechanisms (such as the ones we already have in the books) that punish employers who take advantage of workers and drive down wages, and ones that offer a legal path to citizenship for the 14 million undocumented immigrants who are here in the United States trying to provide a better life for themselves and their families.

We need to push our elected officials at the federal level to take this responsibility seriously, and stop using the immigration issue as a political football for electioneering purposes, especially when they use immigrants as scapegoats for all the problems we are facing as a country. We need to strive to continue to be that shining beacon of hope on a hill to the rest of the world, and embrace our diversity, not vilify it. The District of Columbia is home to hundreds of thousands of immigrants from all over the world, and Ward One is a beautiful microcosm of that cultural diversity that makes the nation's capital so vibrant. When elected, I will make it a priority to protect that diversity and find ways to enrich and nurture it — for we are all better because of it.