



# KEYS TO JUSTICE

*Unlocking Fairness  
for Everyone in Our City*



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## Children, Schools, & Juvenile Justice

As the top lawyer for the District of Columbia, I'll fight hard to make sure that children's services continue to get better. We've made some progress, but too many kids are leaving our schools and entering our juvenile justice system. Our court system needs to recognize that many at-risk kids are in a state of trauma. As Attorney General, I'll work to ensure a fair system that makes sure we prioritize educating our kids over incarcerating them.

### Work to Reduce the Institutionalized Racial Disparities in our Juvenile Justice System

In Fiscal Year 2011, 96 percent of children supervised by the Department of Youth and Rehabilitative Services, our juvenile justice agency, were African-American. Just as staggering, 50 percent of children under supervision were from Wards 7 and 8.<sup>1</sup> As Attorney General, I will emphasize that our city has a problem on this issue, bring about a dialogue with the relevant stakeholders, and formulate solutions with community input to finally put an end to the gross institutionalized racial inequities in our juvenile justice system.

### Wraparound Services at our Schools

About 10 percent of all crimes committed in the District are committed by juveniles.<sup>2</sup> In 2013, there were approximately 3,300 juvenile crimes committed in our city.<sup>3</sup> The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) will do a better job of working with other departments and agencies to provide wraparound services and programs at our schools — this is a key preventative measure to reduce juvenile crime. A study has demonstrated that children who are victims of maltreatment at home are much more likely to be disengaged at school, which leads to a much greater risk of delinquency.<sup>4</sup> If we can increase engagement at schools for at-risk youths, we should see a decrease in juvenile crime.<sup>5</sup> We will work with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), school administrators, teachers, and social workers to identify at-risk kids and engage them in the school system to nudge them away from activities that lead to entering the juvenile justice system.

### Eliminate the "School-to-Prison-Pipeline"

The "School-to-Prison-Pipeline" is a disturbing trend in our city and our country. Too many policies have been put in place in the past few decades that take kids out of our schools and put them into our juvenile justice system. The Vera Institute for Justice has stated that "students who are suspended or expelled for a discretionary

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<sup>1</sup> D.C. Department of Rehabilitative Services, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Compared UCR crime rates, available in MPD 2013 annual report with MPD biannual report on juvenile arrests January to June 2013 and June to December 2013.

[http://mpdc.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/mpdc/publication/attachments/MPD%20Annual%20Report%202013\\_lowres.pdf](http://mpdc.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/mpdc/publication/attachments/MPD%20Annual%20Report%202013_lowres.pdf) and <http://mpdc.dc.gov/page/biannual-reports-juvenile-arrests>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Sender, Kimberly. "The Mediating Effect of School Engagement in the Relationship between Youth Maltreatment and Juvenile Delinquency," *Children and Schools* 34, no. 1, (2012): pp. 37-48. <http://cs.oxfordjournals.org/content/34/1/37>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

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school violation are 2.85 times more likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system within the next academic year."<sup>6</sup>

But there is hope we can end the "School-to-Prison-Pipeline." We can divert kids out of the juvenile justice system and into social, educational, and rehabilitative programs. The first point of diversion is called a "paperless diversion." This means that the Attorney General can inform the MPD that small incidents like loitering or truancy by children shouldn't warrant an arrest, and that the officer can put the child in an educational program instead of the costly prosecutorial and juvenile justice system.

The second route for diversion occurs after a child has been arrested and processed. The Attorney General and the Court Social Services Division can coordinate and decide whether a child could be diverted. More children should be diverted at this stage.

The final opportunity for diversion is after a child has been convicted and is in the sentencing process. The judge can decide to divert the child to an education program, instead of sending him or her to New Beginnings, the District's juvenile system center. As Attorney General, I will recommend to our judges that more kids be diverted at this stage. It's the only way we can start putting an end to our unfair and flawed juvenile justice system.

In addition, I will utilize more "Rule 48's" in juvenile cases. A Rule 48 is a legal avenue to dismiss proceedings.<sup>7</sup> Rule 48's have been underutilized and are integral to ensuring a more humane juvenile justice system.

### **Don't Shackle Juveniles**

Shackling juveniles can cause them severe emotional trauma and distress and only increases the likelihood that shackled juveniles will commit more crimes.<sup>8</sup> That is why I am working with Chief Judge Lee Satterfield, Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie, Councilmember David Grosso, the Public Defender Service for D.C., and others to draft an administrative order to allow shackling only as needed on a case-by-case basis.

### **Focus on Homeless Juveniles**

Homelessness and juvenile delinquency are intricately linked. Children who commit a crime are more likely to get kicked out of their home, and homeless kids are far more likely to commit crime, leading to a vicious cycle of poverty, crime, and hopelessness.<sup>9</sup>

This problem also disproportionately presents difficulties for LGBT children as they account for up to 40 percent of homeless youth.<sup>10</sup> The OAG will begin considering who are the homeless youth in our city and recognize them as victims and then act accordingly.

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<sup>6</sup> Written Testimony of Michael Jacobson to the US Senate. Vera Institute for Justice, December 12, 2012.

<http://www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/michael-jacobson-testimony-school-to-prison-pipeline.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> District of Columbia Rules Governing Juvenile Procedures, Rule 48. <http://www.njdc.info/pdf/DCRules.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Nabha Anita; "Shuffling to Justice - Why Children Should Not Be Shackled in Court;" 73 *Brooklyn Law Review*, (2007-2008).

[http://www.brooklaw.edu/~media/PDF/LawJournals/BLR\\_PDF/blr\\_v73iv.ashx](http://www.brooklaw.edu/~media/PDF/LawJournals/BLR_PDF/blr_v73iv.ashx)

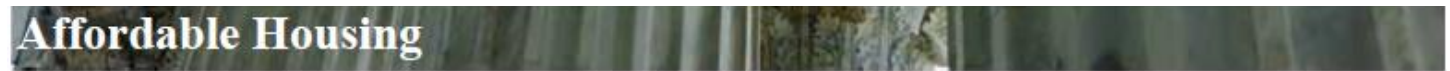
<sup>9</sup> Kaufman, J. G.; Widom, C. S. 1999. Childhood Victimization, Running Away, and Delinquency. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 36(4):347-370.

## **I will conduct a Top-to-Bottom Review of the Ability to Enforce a Termination of Parental Rights**

The tragic case of Relisha Rudd should be a rallying cry for this city to have a moment of introspection about how we serve our most vulnerable children. The Attorney General has the authority to enforce a Termination of Parental Rights.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, I will have a complete top-to-bottom review of when the OAG should enforce a Termination of Parental Rights, so that we have fewer cases of children living unfit conditions. For a review of how District Government Agencies interacted with Relisha Rudd and her family, please read the report, “Summarized Findings and Recommendations: Review of Interactions with RR and Her Immediate Family and District Government Agencies.”<sup>12</sup> The report concludes that the District’s government agencies were not at fault for the fate of Relisha Rudd. The District government should not shirk responsibility in this way.

### **Victim Rights**

We must ensure that victims of crime have a right to individual justice. The juvenile justice system has to balance this against the interest in rehabilitating our youth. Part of this delicate balance is keeping confidential the identity of the juvenile offender. Juvenile proceedings are generally secret to avoid stigmatizing young people who still have a chance to change for the better. This is a worthy goal, but it can’t come at the cost of refusing victims of serious crimes the chance to know that justice has been done. I will make full use of my discretion as the Attorney General to notify victims of what has happened to their offenders.<sup>13</sup> This allows victims to know that the system is protecting them, and to feel safe in the knowledge that their offender is at a safe distance.



**The District of Columbia has been ranked as one of the most expensive city in the country to live in.<sup>14</sup> The District has been lackluster in achieving its affordable housing goals.<sup>15</sup> Too many middle class and working families are getting squeezed out of the city, and the Attorney General has the power to help alleviate this problem.**

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<sup>10</sup> Durso, L.E., & Gates, G.J. *Serving Our Youth: Findings from a National Survey of Service Providers Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth who are Homeless or At Risk of Becoming Homeless*. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund and The Palette Fund. 2012. <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Durso-Gates-LGBT-Homeless-Youth-Survey-July-2012.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> D.C. Code § 16-2305. <http://dccode.org/simple/sections/16-2305.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Summarized Findings and Recommendations: Review of Interactions with RR and Her Immediate Family and District Government Agencies. Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services. September 2, 2014. [http://dme.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dme/publication/attachments/RR%20Report%20FINAL%209%202%2014\\_Redacted.pdf](http://dme.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dme/publication/attachments/RR%20Report%20FINAL%209%202%2014_Redacted.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> D.C. Code § 16-2331. <http://dccode.org/simple/sections/16-2331.html>

<sup>14</sup> Scopelitti, Demetrio M. *Housing: Before, During, and After the Great Recession*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. September 2014. <http://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2014/housing/pdf/housing.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> O’Connell, Jonathan. "Officials Say D.C. is Halfway to Goal of 10,000 Affordable Housing Units." *The Washington Post*. August 7, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/digger/wp/2014/08/07/officials-say-d-c-is-halfway-to-goal-of-10000-affordable-housing-units/>

## **Fully Enforce the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act of 1980**

When a landlord decides to sell a building, tenants can offer to buy their buildings. In many cases, landlords prevent tenants from purchasing their building by intentionally allowing it to deteriorate beyond conditions fit for living. This is a strategy that results in tenants being forced out.

The Attorney General has the power to bring suit against unscrupulous landlords who force their tenants to live in unfit conditions. This authority has not been used as much as it should be. As the Attorney General, I want to fully enforce this law and educate the public and raise awareness of the rights of tenants under this law.

## **Implement the Affordable Housing Set Aside Requirement**

The law requires a bare minimum of eight percent of units in new developments to be affordable housing units.<sup>16</sup> All too often, developers receive waivers for this requirement. I will enforce the law on this issue and fight to make sure that “sweetheart deals” are a thing of the past.

## **Be a Tough Negotiator on City Land Sales**

When the District conducts land sales, our city often loses out on opportunities to increase the amount of affordable housing we can have.<sup>17</sup> The Attorney General negotiates the city's land sales.<sup>18</sup> In order to ensure that more middle class and working families can live in the District, I will use my authority to negotiate city land sales to include more affordable housing. This is a simple fix to a big problem.

## **Introduce a Tenants' Complaints Hotline**

Our city needs to know when a landlord is abusing his or her power. I am working to create a Tenants' Complaint Hotline to make sure the OAG has complete informational awareness for investigatory purposes. The fiasco at the Museum Square apartment building in Chinatown, where a landlord tried to force elderly minorities out of their homes, could have been resolved earlier if we had a Tenants' Complaint Hotline.<sup>19</sup>

## **Create an Office of Affordable Housing that Directly Reports to the Attorney General**

There is currently no Office of Affordable Housing in the OAG. Because affordable housing is of paramount importance, creating this office will guarantee that the OAG takes a more active role on this issue in the District.

## **Start a Division of Community Outreach to Stay Connected to Our Neighborhoods**

With the Attorney General now being an elected official, community outreach and education programs have become integral to the role. The U.S. Attorney has 17 community outreach programs. I will push to collaborate on

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<sup>16</sup> 11 DCMR § 2603. <http://dcode.org/simple/sections/42-3404.01.html>

<sup>17</sup> Cort, Cheryl. "D.C. Sells Valuable Land, But Loses Interest Using It to Create Affordable Housing.

<sup>18</sup> D.C. Code § 301.86a.

<sup>19</sup> Samuels, Robert. "Black, Asian Residents Unite to Save Low-Income Building Near Chinatown." *The Washington Post*. August 6, 2014. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/black-and-asian-residents-unite-to-savelow-income-building-on-edge-of-chinatown/2014/08/06/552accf0-189c-11e4-85b6-c1451e622637\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/black-and-asian-residents-unite-to-savelow-income-building-on-edge-of-chinatown/2014/08/06/552accf0-189c-11e4-85b6-c1451e622637_story.html)

these community outreach programs in the U.S. Attorney's office — or even possibly absorb them. The Attorney General ought to be performing this outreach, and I will.

## Economic Growth

**The OAG must protect our workers and our city's small businesses. From clarifying regulations to cracking down on wage theft, as Attorney General, I will be a champion for economic growth and fairness.**

### **Clarify Unclear Regulations Related to Businesses**

I will create a business liaison attorney position to work with the business community to clarify any ambiguous business regulations. By clarifying regulations, the OAG will have an impact on economic growth and job creation.

### **Make Sure the City Awards Its Fair Share to Local Small Businesses**

I will use the authority of my office to investigate city contracts as a tool to put pressure on agencies and the Council to award a fair share of contracts to local small businesses. The recent scandal about the city "ignoring laws requiring city agencies to spend a certain percentage of their budgets on contracts with small businesses" highlights the need for the Attorney General to step in to guarantee that local small businesses don't get pushed aside.<sup>20</sup>

### **Crack Down on Wage Theft**

The Minimum Wage Revision Act of 1992 and the Wage Theft Protection Act of 2014 give authority to the Attorney General to investigate and rectify wage theft.<sup>21</sup> According to the Employment Justice Center, "wage theft occurs when employers refuse to pay employees the correct wages by withholding an employee's stated rate of pay, overtime, or other earned compensation such as vacation."<sup>22</sup> The Employment Justice Center also reports that "each low-wage worker loses \$51 per week to wage theft, or \$2,634 per year."<sup>23</sup> As Attorney General, I will use my power to fight for working families and crack down on wage theft.

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<sup>20</sup> Sommer, Will. "Orange Scolds Gray on Small Business Spending, But Mayor Says the Numbers Are All Wrong." *Washington City Paper*. September 23, 2014. <http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/blogs/looselips/2014/09/23/orange-scolds-gray-on-small-business-spending-but-mayor-says-the-numbers-are-all-wrong/#more-23749>

<sup>21</sup> D.C. Code § 32-1011

<sup>22</sup> Protecting Wages: The EJC Fights Wage Theft in D.C. Employment Justice Center. <http://www.dcejc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/EJC-WageTheft-Facts.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

## Rooting Out Corruption & Restoring Ethics and Accountability

### **Institute Term Limits on the Attorney General**

One of the keys to helping eliminate corruption and restoring confidence in our city's government is to implement term limits.<sup>24</sup> The Attorney General should be limited to serving two four-year terms. This will make sure that the Attorney General won't be captured by special interests who hijack the regulatory process.

### **Make it Easier for Whistleblowers to Expose Corruption**

An integral part of any well-functioning and accountable city government is high ethical standards. I am working to create a confidential hotline, an online portal, and a dedicated investigative team to accept and inspect accusations of corruption, unethical behavior, and wrong-doing from whistleblowers in the city government.

### **Hold Government Entities Accountable for Their Contracting Practices**

Government entities are given discretion in their contracting and vendor services. This opens up opportunities for illegal practices.<sup>25</sup> That is why I am working to create a dedicated section, within the OAG, to investigate contract fraud.

## Criminal Justice

### **Allow the Attorney General to Prosecute Felonies**

The ability to prosecute felonies that occur in the District should be within the authority of the Attorney General. As a start, I am placing a request with the U.S. Attorney to co-try cases.

### **Work to Reduce Gun Crime in the District**

The recent ruling that overturned D.C.'s concealed carry law was an assault on our autonomy, and it will lead to more gun crime in our city. As the Attorney General, I will work with the District Council to examine our legal strategy to make sure that we can create and enforce our own gun laws.

### **Defelonize Certain Nonviolent Drug Crimes**

Overly strict, reactionary drug laws created decades ago that focused on use, not distribution, have institutionalized criminality and had the effect of targeting certain classes of users, particularly poor minorities.

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<sup>24</sup> Beylis, Guillermo, Federico Finan, and Maurizio Mazzocco. Understanding Corruption: Theory and Evidence from the Audits of Local Governments." May 2012. [https://economics.wusth.edu/files/economicssince/mazzocco\\_paper.pdf](https://economics.wusth.edu/files/economicssince/mazzocco_paper.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Brown, Emma. "Options Public Charter School Officials Diverted Millions, Lawsuit Alleges." *The Washington Post*. October 1, 2013. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/charter-school-officials-diverted-millions-lawsuit-alleges/2013/10/01/05fdc4f2-2aae-11e3-b139-029811dbb57f\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/charter-school-officials-diverted-millions-lawsuit-alleges/2013/10/01/05fdc4f2-2aae-11e3-b139-029811dbb57f_story.html)



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With that in mind, I will ask the District Council to defelonize certain nonviolent drug crimes so that we can move away from an inhumane policy that has resulted in mass incarceration.<sup>26</sup>

### **Have the OAG Get Involved in Community Policing**

The OAG is working with the MPD to form partnerships in targeted communities to support community policing initiatives. Community policing is integral to building stronger relationships among our residents, police officers, and government agencies.

### **Collaborate with the U.S. Attorney on Wrongful Convictions**

The U.S. Attorney recently created a Conviction Integrity Committee to go back and investigate possible wrongful convictions.<sup>27</sup> In the last five years alone, five wrongful convictions — due to mistakes made by the U.S. Attorney — have been discovered. I will request to work with the U.S. Attorney to offer any type of assistance needed to help make this discovery process for wrongful convictions faster and more efficient. Any individuals who continue to spend time in prison for crimes they did not commit should receive true justice.

### **Add Body Cameras to Police Officers' Uniforms**

Rising trends in use-of-force incidents across the country allow us to reflect on the best way to make sure every police officer treats citizens or visitors with the respect they deserve. I am pleased that the District has implemented a body camera program for the MPD. I will continue to support this program. A recent study has demonstrated that body cameras on police officers results in over a 50 percent decrease in use-of-force incidents.<sup>28</sup>

### **Witness Protection**

Witnesses who testify against dangerous criminals deserve our protection. Unfortunately, our prosecutors don't have an in-house source of money that we can use to move or compensate witnesses. Witnesses must have their protection agreed to by the court and witness compensation is only done after the fact. We should be willing to foot the bill to maintain the integrity of our system. I have begun advocating for a witness protection and compensation fund within the OAG to make sure our witnesses can testify without fear of retribution.



**One of the biggest responsibilities of the Attorney General is to look out for consumers. The Attorney General has wide-ranging powers to protect consumers by going after and prosecuting bad actors who take advantage of consumers, predatory lenders who take advantage of families and seniors, and**

<sup>26</sup> D.C. Code § 1-204.04(a). <http://dccode.org/simple/sections/1-204.04.html>

<sup>27</sup> Hsu, Spencer. "D.C. Prosecutors Create Unit to Find Wrongful Convictions." *The Washington Post*. September 11, 2014. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/crime/dc-prosecutors-create-unit-to-find-wrongful-convictions/2014/09/11/91a3722c-39da-11e4-bdfb-de4104544a37\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/crime/dc-prosecutors-create-unit-to-find-wrongful-convictions/2014/09/11/91a3722c-39da-11e4-bdfb-de4104544a37_story.html)

<sup>28</sup> Farrar, Tony. Self-Awareness to Being Watched and Socially Desirable Behavior: A Field Experiment on the Effect of Body-Worn Cameras on Police Use-of-Force. The Police Foundation. March, 2013. <http://www.policefoundation.org/sites/g/files/g798246/f/201303/The%20Effect%20of%20Body-Worn%20Cameras%20on%20Police%20Use-of-Force.pdf>

corporations that use deceptive business practices.<sup>29</sup> Attorneys General in other states have been able to collect large settlements in consumer cases. For instance, the Attorney General in neighboring Maryland has collected hundreds of millions of dollars on behalf of consumers.<sup>30</sup>

### Go After Payday Lenders

The exponential growth of payday lenders has directly contributed to the economic hardship of working families. There are as many payday lenders in our country as there are Starbucks and McDonald's combined.<sup>31</sup>

Some lenders take advantage of people in need of economic help and hit them with exorbitant interest rates. Payday lenders tend to take advantage of individuals without bank accounts. According to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, 33.9 percent of African-Americans are underbanked and 21.4 percent are without a bank account.<sup>32</sup>

Even worse, some payday lenders are taking their businesses online to avoid District regulatory oversight.<sup>33</sup> At the Attorney General, I will use my authority to crack down on payday lenders side-stepping the rules, bring more civil suits against aggressive lenders, and work with the District Council and Mayor to highlight this growing problem.

### Strengthen Regulations on Pawn and Title Loans

In many instances, banks won't go into low-income neighborhoods, making it extremely difficult for the poor to get and build credit. This opens up an opportunity for companies that engage in abusive pawn and title loans that take advantage of individuals in need of money. These companies jack up interest rates to make it hard to pay back loans, and then take possession of the collateral. I will work with the District Council to create tougher regulations on this industry so that the OAG can go after these predatory lenders.

### Enforce Fair Debt Collection Practices

We're coming out of tough economic times, and many families are struggling to recover. During the Great Recession, many families had to go into debt just to cover their bills. The District has tough laws on debt collection practices by companies, but these laws are not enforced as often as they should be. These laws ban debt collectors from harassing debtors, among numerous other provisions.<sup>34</sup> I will enforce these laws in a more consistent, strict fashion.

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<sup>29</sup> D.C. Code §§ 28-3901 to 28-3913. <http://dccode.org/simplefftitle-28/Chapter-39/>

<sup>30</sup> See e.g., "AG Gansler: Medtronic, Inc. Settles Kickback Allegations for \$9.9 Million;" "AG Gansler Secures \$75 Million for Maryland Government Entities and Pension Systems from Housing Securities Settlement with Bank of America." <http://www.oag.state.md.us/Press/2014/092514.html>; <http://www.oag.state.md.us/Press/2014/082114.html>

<sup>31</sup> Douglas, Danielle. "There Are Almost as Many Payday Lenders as McDonald's and Starbucks. No, really." *The Washington Post*. March 26, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2014/03/26/there-are-almost-as-many-payday-lenders-as-mcdonalds-and-starbucks-no-really/>

<sup>32</sup> 2011 FDIC National Survey of Underbanked and Unbanked Households. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. September, 2012. [https://www.fdic.gov/householdsurvey/2012\\_unbankedreport.pdf](https://www.fdic.gov/householdsurvey/2012_unbankedreport.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Wise, Lindsay. "Payday Lenders Move Online as Regulators Crack Down." *McClatchy D.C.* September 9, 2013. [http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2013/09/09/201427\\_payday-lenders-move-online-as.html?rh=1](http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2013/09/09/201427_payday-lenders-move-online-as.html?rh=1)

<sup>34</sup> D.C. Code § 28-3814. <http://oag.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/oag/publication/attachments/28-3814%20-%20debt%20collection%20law.pdf>

## Crack Down on Predatory Tax Lien Practices

In a disturbing trend, out of town companies have been purchasing tax liens totaling as little as \$134, and then jacking up interest rates and fees on the lien, making it impossible for the homeowner to afford to pay, which then results in foreclosure on the home.<sup>35</sup>

I will go after companies that purchase these tax liens for the sole purpose of kicking out homeowners. It's a morally unacceptable practice that shouldn't happen in our city. These tax lien bidders often collude to lower bid prices, which gives the OAG the ability to go after them on ground of antitrust violations. I will enforce the Residential Real Property Equity and Transparency Act of 2013 to the fullest extent possible.

## Educate Seniors on the Potential Risks of Reverse Mortgages and Other Scams

As more and more District residents age out of the workforce, they wonder how they'll afford retirement. One of the options some seniors have pursued is reverse mortgages. While this can add wealth to a retirement plan, it also has risks. In many cases, when the owner of a reverse mortgage dies, say a senior, their heir, often the spouse of the senior, inherits the contract. Death of the borrower often triggers repayment to the lender, leading to foreclosure for many widows or widowers in their darkest hour.<sup>36</sup> I am working to create a public education campaign with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to inform and educate seniors on the potential pitfalls of a reverse mortgage.

## Statehood & Autonomy

**District residents deserve the rights granted to other American citizens when it comes to statehood and autonomy. We are a population without full representation, and it's time to change that.**

### Advocate for Statehood

Statehood is a basic issue of equality and fairness. On September 15, 2014, the U.S. Senate held a hearing, "Equality for the District of Columbia." The hearing discussed S. 132, the New Columbia Admission Act of 2013, which would limit the federal areas in the District to land around the U.S. Capitol and the White House. It would admit the rest of the District as the 51st state.<sup>37</sup> As the Attorney General, I will take up the fight for statehood and will support this and other bills that guarantee full civil rights to the people of our city.

### Fight for Budget Autonomy

Budget autonomy is integral for us to govern our city. It's a basic right of self-government. The District government regularly passes a balanced budget, but Congress' inability to govern can result in a D.C. shutdown.

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<sup>35</sup> Sa11ah, Michael, Debbie Cenziper and Steven Rich. "Left With Nothing." *The Washington Post*. September 8, 2013. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/investigative/2013/09/08/left-with-nothing/>

<sup>36</sup> Sheedy, Rachel L. "What Heirs Need to Know About Reverse Mortgages." *Kiplinger*. March, 2014.

<http://www.kiplinger.com/article/retirement/T021-C000-5004-what-heirs-need-to-know-about-reverse-mortgages.html>

<sup>37</sup> S. 132, New Columbia Admission Act.

If we can't spend our local tax and fee revenue without first getting an appropriation from Congress, we'll never be the makers of our own destiny. I will work with everyone to make sure that we finally get full budget autonomy.

### **Help the District Achieve Our Benchmarks in Consent Decrees**

A consent decree is an agreement between the District and another party to resolve a dispute typically a delivery of services to a local population — child services, etc. These consent decrees were meant to be short-term fixes, but they have dragged on, becoming an assault on the District's autonomy. I am working with OAG attorneys to take a fresh look at these consent decrees and working with the court to come up with a plan to meet appropriate benchmarks. This would help the District regain autonomy on the issues covered within the consent decrees.



## Environment

**We've got a lot of environmental concerns in our city — from cleaning up the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers to protecting and enforcing laws to preserve green spaces. The Attorney General has a significant role to play in making sure we allow our kids to inherit an environmentally sustainable city.**

### **Create a Regional Environmental Council of Attorneys General to Go After Polluters**

There is a great deal of environmentally connective concerns between the people of the District and the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Delaware. Polluters in those states have a tremendous impact on the water and air that flows into our city. That's why I will create a regional environmental council of Attorneys General from surrounding jurisdictions to go after the big polluters who are causing irreparable damage to our air and water quality.

### **Make Cleaning up the Anacostia River a Priority**

According to D.C. Appleseed, the Anacostia River is "one of the most polluted waterways in the nation."<sup>38</sup> The OAG will use the Water Pollution Control Act of 1984 to vigorously pursue polluters of the Anacostia.<sup>39</sup> Just last year, violations of the Water Pollutions Control Act of 1984 resulted in nearly a million dollars collected from polluters to be used to clean up our waterways.<sup>40</sup>

### **Use Green Infrastructure to Clean Up Sewer Runoff**

The District is under a consent decree to clean up sewer runoff that pollutes our rivers.<sup>41</sup> When the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ordered this consent decree, green technology had not been introduced

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<sup>38</sup> A New Day for the Anacostia. D.C. Appleseed. 2011. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/54446199/DC-Appleseed-A-New-Day-for-the-Anacostia-Report>

<sup>39</sup> Water Pollution Control Act of 1984. <http://green.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddoe/publication/attachments/VWaterPollAct.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> "Pepco to Pay \$250,000 to Penalty, Install \$600,000 Trash Trap in Settlement for Water Pollution Violations." Office of the Attorney General. March 28, 2014. <http://oag.dc.gov/release/pepco-pay-250000-penalty-install-600000-trash-trap-settlement-water-pollution-violations>

<sup>41</sup> D.C. Water Consent Decree. [https://www.dcwater.com/workzones/projects/pdfs/Itcp/Itcp\\_consent\\_decree.pdf](https://www.dcwater.com/workzones/projects/pdfs/Itcp/Itcp_consent_decree.pdf)

## KEYS TO JUSTICE

to the market. Since then, the District has expressed a desire to use green technology to clean up the runoff. I will work with the D.C. District Court and the EPA so that our city can use emerging technology to address this endemic problem.