



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Washington, DC, June 22, 2025

GLAA is proud to announce its ratings for the candidates of the 2025 D.C. Ward 8 Special Election. The ratings are based solely on the issues and may not be interpreted as endorsements. Founded in 1971, GLAA is an all-volunteer, non-partisan, non-profit civic organization. GLAA serves as a network of people committed to defending human rights and advocating for the advancement of LGBTQ+ people in the District of Columbia. GLAA is the nation's oldest continuously active LGBTQ+ civil rights organization.

GLAA sent questionnaires to candidates that are listed on the official D.C. Board of Elections ballot. We invited the candidates in the 2025 Ward 8 Special Election who were eligible to be rated by GLAA to answer questions based on the [2024 GLAA policy brief](#). We rank the candidates' responses to our questionnaire according to whether they (a) responded affirmatively or not, (b) how much depth and clarity they had in their answers, and (c) how their shared track record reflects the stance they are defending. Upon deliberation, candidates are assigned a score that is converted to a number between -10 and 10. A candidate with a score of 10 is someone who is in agreement with all the policies presented in the brief, giving thorough answers that show they understand the issues, while presenting a track record that shows proof of their commitment to the causes.

**GLAA Ethics Disclaimer:** GLAA believes that elected officials are stewards of the public trust and therefore must hold themselves accountable to the highest ethical standards. GLAA, therefore, will not issue any rating for candidates who, in their capacity as elected officials, were expelled from any elected post, or resigned, for ethics violations that include, but are not limited to, conflicts of interest, self-dealing, and malfeasance.

GLAA thanks all the candidates who responded to our questionnaire. More information, including the candidate's responses and a short explanation of our rates are available below.

RACE	Name of candidate	Total Score	Yes/No Score	Depth Score	Record Score
	<i>Range</i>	<i>-10/+10</i>	<i>-2/+2</i>	<i>-4/+4</i>	<i>-4/+4</i>
Ward 8 Special Election	Salim Adofo	4.5	1.5	2	1
	Mike Austin	6.5	2	3	1.5
	Sheila Bunn	7.5	1	3.5	3

*Questionnaire Key available ratings points: yes/no +/- 2 points Questionnaire: substantive grasp of issues +/- 4 points Record: +/- 4 points Total available: +/- 10 points*

Ward 8 Special Election Questionnaire Response Files:

- [Salim Adofo](#)
- [Mike Austin](#)
- [Sheila Bunn](#)

The **Ward 8 Special Election** ratings are as follows:

**Salim Adofo** (+4.5) agrees with GLAA on most of the issues, but did not take a clear position on taxation, overdose prevention centers, sex work decriminalization, and social housing. He generally gives thoughtful responses, but does not include much detail about his past record on these issues. Adofo doesn't cite any direct LGBTQ advocacy or specific actions in his answers—there's no mention of LGBTQ people or issues except in the Office of Human Rights question, but GLAA members are aware of his engagement as a Ward 8 community leader for many years on issues important to the health and wellbeing of Ward 8's LGBTQ+ community. He often frames his support in terms of Ward 8's needs and talks about working with coalitions or reviewing proposals, rather than laying out specific plans. Adofo's responses indicate more than a cursory knowledge and experience with the issues, but he does not go beyond generalities.

**Mike Austin** (+6.5) agrees with GLAA on almost all the issues, with some unclear stances on taxation and social housing. He demonstrates an engagement with the issues in the policy questionnaire and their impact on Ward 8 constituents. Even on issues where he doesn't have a personal record he demonstrates knowledge of the relevant DC legislative record. Austin provides detailed, policy-driven responses and backs them up with a strong record on criminal justice reform, harm reduction, and inclusion. He explicitly references LGBTQ and marginalized communities and connects his legislative experience to GLAA priorities. Even on more complex issues like social housing, he's upfront about the need for "a clear implementation plan, cost analysis, and strong community input," showing both support and a practical approach.

**Sheila Bunn** (+7.5) agrees with GLAA on most issues, but disagreed on taxation and social work licenses, and did not take a clear stance on sex work or drug use decriminalization and social housing. She has a record of LGBTQ advocacy and public service. Her answers are thorough and community-centered, especially on crisis response, OHR funding, jail oversight, and social housing—she consistently explains why these issues matter and how they impact LGBTQ residents. She detailed to GLAA her past experiences supporting LGBTQ people in her community and her contributions to queer spaces and efforts to support the growth and development of LGBTQ people in DC for many years. She demonstrates a depth of understanding of complexity and willingness to navigate ambiguity and difficult decisions. Bunn cites hands-on work for marriage equality, transgender employment, anti-discrimination in insurance, HIV/AIDS prevention, and direct engagement with LGBTQ organizations. She's been in the room for major policy wins and continues to show up for the community.

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