

Executive Summary:

Washington, D.C. operates on a double standard. The glass towers of the western corridors expand rapidly, while historically Black neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River endure systematic disinvestment and municipal neglect. Citywide child poverty rests at seventeen percent, but east of the river in Wards 7 and 8, it surges past thirty percent. This economic divide shows up directly in the job market. Ward 8 faces nearly ten percent unemployment, and Ward 7 sits near eight percent, while the wealthy, predominantly white western neighborhoods enjoy virtually full employment at three to four percent. These numbers are not natural. They are the direct result of structured inequality and a city government that has long prioritized high-end real estate speculation and corporate developer tax breaks over the basic rights of working-class families. To build a stable community, D.C. must completely rewrite how it supports families, administers public benefits, and defines community safety. For decades, the local child support system has acted as a collections agency for the government rather than a safety net for kids. When families receive cash assistance through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the city intercepts child support payments to repay itself and the federal government. This regressive model strips local families of financial independence and locks low-income fathers into an inescapable cycle of debt, license suspensions, and legal penalties. We need a different model. True family stability means treating early childhood care, healthy food, and wealth-building assets as basic rights. By letting families keep 100% of their child support payments, supporting worker-owned grocery cooperatives to end food deserts, and paying early educators wages on par with public school teachers, the District can build an economy that actually works for the people.

Critical Evaluation of Opposing Platforms

Working families face two incomplete paths in the current political landscape. On one side is a developer-aligned, corporate-friendly candidate; on the other, a progressive challenger focused on isolated social-welfare proposals. Neither platform offers a cohesive, structurally funded way to lift up the working class.

The developer-backed candidate, who used to lead the Council's business committee, relies heavily on market-driven, trickle-down ideas. Their childcare plan rests on giving tax incentives to employers and relaxing zoning laws for home-based centers. This approach leaves out low-wage workers whose employers offer no benefits and exposes early childhood care to private equity firms. Even worse, this candidate sponsored the Child Wealth Building Act (Baby Bonds) but failed to secure real funding for it. Instead of funding it through stable, progressive taxes, they tied the program to highly volatile online sports betting contracts. When that betting market crashed, the program was defunded and eventually repealed, leaving thousands of low-income



RAISING THE STANDARDS

Child Support & Family Stability System

infants without any wealth-building support. On food security, this candidate relies on slow real-estate development timelines, tying grocery store incentives to major stadium construction projects. Their public safety model is equally wasteful, focusing on doubling police hiring bonuses to fifty thousand dollars—a strategy that drains city revenue without addressing why crime happens in the first place. The progressive Ward 4 challenger has championed ideas like "Childcare for All" and municipal grocery stores. But these plans operate in a vacuum. While the challenger proposes capping childcare costs at seven percent of family income, they ignore how the punitive child support system actively drains money from the same families. Their platform fails to mention child support reform, ignoring how driver's license suspensions and unpayable debt push Black fathers out of the formal job market. Furthermore, their proposal for fully state-run grocery stores introduces massive administrative challenges and high startup costs that delay relief for neighborhoods suffering under food deserts. This challenger's campaign has also faced questions over its close ties to union-backed political action groups, which complicates their promises of independent leadership. Our comprehensive platform bridges these gaps. We combine restorative child support reforms with direct cash assistance, fully funded early education, and community-owned cooperatives. Best of all, we fund these plans through reliable, progressive revenue so they cannot be vetoed or cut during a budget squeeze.

Policy Dimension	Our Comprehensive Family Stability Platform	The Developer-Aligned At-Large Platform	The Ward 4 Progressive Platform
Child Support and Family Wealth	100% pass-through of current support and arrears; complete debt amnesty; non-carceral enforcement.	Standard government cost-recovery; reliance on private legal collections and punitive penalties.	Incremental pass-through adjustments; complete lack of anti-carceral child support reforms.
Childcare and Educator Parity	\$177.1M subsidy to eliminate the waitlist; \$94.2M to restore full Pay Equity parity; repeal of punitive absence limits.	Private employer incentives; home-based zoning expansion; reliance on unstable tax credits.	Seven percent income cap; co-location in schools; standard support for pay equity.

Economic and Food Sovereignty	\$15M Municipal-Cooperative Program; zero-rent public facilities leased to community-owned co-ops.	Private developer tax incentives tied to real estate and professional stadium campuses.	Fully state-owned, state-operated municipal retail grocery stores.
Intergenerational Equity	Permanent \$30M Baby Bonds funding via General Fund; eligibility expanded to Healthcare Alliance births.	Tying Baby Bonds to speculative, corporate sports betting, resulting in total budget elimination.	Platform supporter but failed to secure a stable funding defense, allowing executive repeal.
Utility and Corporate Justice	Pepco/Washington Gas rate caps; Public Service Commission reform; ban on corporate lobbyist contributions.	Heavily funded by utility lobbyists; repeatedly voted to approve pro-corporate regulators.	Verbal opposition to utility increases; lacks a legislative mechanism to enforce caps or reform regulators.
Community Safety and Autonomy	Ceasing MPD-ICE cooperation under Sanctuary Values Act; rejecting punitive curfews; redirecting MPD overtime.	Doubling MPD hiring bonuses to \$50,000; expanding youth curfews; expanding pre-trial detention.	Supports MPD-ICE decoupling; opposes curfews; lacks programmatic redirection of MPD overtime.

Decarcerating Child Support and Rebuilding Family Autonomy

D.C.'s child support enforcement system operates as a regressive trap for low-income parents, particularly in Black and Brown communities. We must transition from an extractive cost-recovery model to a family-first system. Moving to a 100% Direct Pass-Through Model

Under current guidelines, the city intercepts child support payments from families receiving TANF benefits. The government keeps anything over two hundred dollars a month to reimburse itself for administering benefits. For these families—who survive on less than thirteen thousand dollars annually—this is devastating. Under our plan, 100% of all current monthly child support and collected arrears will bypass government accounts and go straight to the custodial parents. These payments will not affect TANF eligibility. When parents know their money goes directly to their children instead of municipal bureaucracies, they are far more likely to pay consistently and stay active in their children's lives. Ending the Debt-to-Prison Pipeline

Threatening low-income fathers with license suspensions and jail time does not generate payments; it breaks families apart and forces parents into the underground economy. We will implement:

- **The Child Support Debt Relief and Amnesty Program:** Working with the Office of the Attorney General, the city will systematically forgive government-assigned child support debt (TANF arrears) for parents who make steady payments over a designated period, building on the Fresh Start framework.
- **Eligibility Thresholds:** Parents owing more than one thousand dollars in state-assigned arrears with no voluntary payments in twelve months due to unemployment, illness, or incarceration will be automatically enrolled.
- **Eliminating Interest:** We will halt interest accrual on child support debt for low-income obligors to stop unpayable debts from compounding.
- **Automatic Modifications:** Child support orders will automatically pause for individuals who are incarcerated or enrolled in full-time workforce development programs.
- **Modernizing Enforceability:** Currently, every single unpaid monthly support payment is a separate judgment with its own twelve-year statute of limitations, causing endless legal battles. Our plan simplifies this: all arrears will remain enforceable until five years after the youngest child turns twenty-one (effectively age twenty-six). This protects custodial parents during child-rearing years while giving clear finality to noncustodial parents.



Two-Generation Job Pipelines

Rather than using court threats, we will link child support with employment opportunities. In partnership with the Department of Employment Services and local community colleges, unemployed parents will gain access to certified job training and co-parenting classes. Participating in these workforce programs will serve as a legal alternative to enforcement penalties.

Resolving the Early Education and Childcare Crisis

Early childhood education is a vital public asset. The educators who provide it—mostly Black and Brown women—deserve living wages and fair compensation. Yet the city recently froze enrollment and implemented a waitlist for the Child Care Subsidy Program, shutting out working families. At the same time, the city cut funding for the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, forcing a four to five percent wage reduction on early educators. Our platform fully restores this vital system. Ending the Subsidy Waitlist

With private infant care averaging over twenty-six thousand dollars a year in D.C., low-income families cannot survive without support. We will inject sixty-three point two million dollars into the Child Care Subsidy Program, raising total funding to one hundred seventy-seven point one million dollars. This will eliminate the waitlist, allow new families to enroll, and preserve stable reimbursement rates for providers. Restoring Pay Parity

We will add eighty-two point two million dollars to the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, bringing the total to ninety-four point two million dollars. This reverses the recent salary cuts, re-establishes pay parity with public school teachers, and includes a two percent cost-of-living adjustment. We will also add one point four million dollars to the HealthCare4ChildCare program to provide free, comprehensive medical coverage for educators and their families. Repealing Attendance-Based Cuts

Currently, families lose their childcare subsidy if a child has nineteen unexcused absences in a single month. This punitive policy ignores the unpredictable realities of low-income lives, such as health issues and transportation barriers. We will repeal this rule, replacing it with a supportive outreach model to help families address attendance issues without losing care.



Weaving in Debate Crises: Utility Justice, Public Safety, and Democratic Wealth

A comprehensive platform must address the real crises raised in mayoral forums and debates.

Utility Justice

Families are being crushed by monthly rate hikes from Pepco and Washington Gas. While other candidates took campaign contributions from utility interests, we will cap utility rate increases, audit these companies' local operations, and only confirm Public Service Commissioners who pledge to protect the public interest.

Evidence-Based Public Safety

Doubling police hiring bonuses to fifty thousand dollars to recruit more officers is a costly distraction that drains resources from our schools and social programs. Restricting youth movements through 8 p.m. curfew zones only increases punitive police contact with Black youth. We reject these outdated tactics. We will redirect excessive police overtime budgets into community violence interruption and mental health crisis response teams. We will also close the loophole in the Sanctuary Values Act to prevent local police from collaborating with federal immigration agents. To keep our youth safe, we will invest twenty-seven million dollars in recurring grant funding for comprehensive, high-quality after-school and out-of-school-time programming in all eight wards.

Deep Housing Stability

We must protect existing affordable housing from corporate speculation. We will legally require that thirty percent of the Housing Production Trust Fund be used for preservation. We will invest thirty million dollars in the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) First Right to Purchase Program, helping low-income tenants purchase and co-own their buildings. Finally, we will invest ninety-five million dollars in the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) to prevent evictions for approximately fifteen thousand working families each year.

Sovereign, Stable Baby Bonds

Baby Bonds were repealed because they were funded through unstable online sports betting rather than permanent, progressive taxes. We will restore the program with a permanent thirty million dollar annual General Fund allocation. We will also expand eligibility to babies born under the D.C. Healthcare Alliance, ensuring low-income immigrant children can also build wealth.

Cooperative Food Sovereignty

To end the food deserts affecting ninety-one thousand residents in Wards 7 and 8, we will invest fifteen million dollars in capital funding to build grocery spaces in these neighborhoods. Instead of running these through slow municipal agencies, we will lease these spaces at zero rent to community-owned, worker-run grocery cooperatives. The city will subsidize inventory through cost-plus pricing modeled on military commissaries, bypassing corporate price-gouging.

Financing the Platform: Reclaiming District Sovereignty and Closing Corporate Loopholes

We can fund this entire three hundred forty-eight point eight million dollar platform without raising sales or property taxes on working-class families. We will do it by closing tax loopholes used by wealthy corporations and out-of-state elites. Permanent Federal Decoupling

In 2026, the federal government overturned a temporary local law that unlinked the District's tax code from the federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). This federal interference cost the city over one hundred fifty million dollars in tax revenue meant for the local Child Tax Credit and EITC expansions. We will pass permanent Static Tax Conformity as of January 1, 2025. Decoupling from OBBBA's regressive business expensing loopholes and tax cuts for the top 1% will recover \$157.6 million annually in local revenue. Closing the Unincorporated Business Loophole

Because of a 1979 court ruling (*Bishop v. District of Columbia*), unincorporated partnerships—like wealthy lobbying, consulting, and law firms—are exempt from the Unincorporated Business franchise tax if their owners live outside the city. Approximately thirty-two percent of mid-to-large businesses in D.C. pay zero business franchise taxes because of this loophole. We will enact a 2.0% **Business Activity Tax (BAT)** on the net economic activity of for-profit firms in the District. The formula for a firm's BAT liability is:

$$T_{\text{BAT}} = r(G - P - R - C)$$

where $r = 0.02$ is the tax rate, G is gross receipts within D.C., P represents purchases from other businesses, R is rent paid, and C represents capital expenditures. To protect small businesses and child care centers, the first \$200,000 of economic activity will be completely exempt. This targeted tax will raise \$500 million annually from wealthy out-of-state partners who currently pay nothing to the city. Capital Gains Surtax

We will implement a 1.5% surtax on resident capital gains income from speculative investments, stocks, and luxury real estate. Because capital gains flow almost entirely to the wealthiest five percent of households, this tax targets passive wealth rather than working-class paychecks, raising \$121 million annually. Restructuring Developer Abatements

D.C. currently spends millions on unproven, trickle-down real estate subsidies like 'Housing in Downtown' and the 'Office to Anything' property tax abatements. We will phase out these developer subsidies to recover \$25 million annually for direct family investments.



Programmatic Timelines, Budgets, and KPIs

To ensure this platform operates smoothly, we have built a phased four-year timeline backed by progressive revenue sources and success metrics. Progressive Revenue and Programmatic Budget Allocation

Progressive Revenue Source	Annual Projected Revenue	Programmatic Budget Allocation	Annual Program Cost
Business Activity Tax (2.0% Rate)	\$500.0 Million	Child Care Subsidy Program (Waitlist Elimination)	\$63.2 Million
Static Tax Conformity (OBBBA Decoupling)	\$157.6 Million	Pay Equity Fund (Restoring Teacher Parity)	\$82.2 Million
Capital Gains Surtax (1.5% Rate)	\$121.0 Million	Sovereign Baby Bonds (General Fund Restoration)	\$30.0 Million
Corporate Abatement Phased Reductions	\$25.0 Million	Out-of-School-Time Recurring Grants	\$27.0 Million
		Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)	\$95.0 Million
		Tenant Purchase Fund (TOPA Preservation)	\$30.0 Million
		Municipal-Cooperative Food	\$15.0 Million

		Sovereignty	
		NCP Workforce Pipeline and Support	\$5.0 Million
		HealthCare4Child Care Expansion	\$1.4 Million
Total Annual Revenue Generated	\$803.6 Million	Total Annual Programmatic Cost	\$348.8 Million

Phased Implementation Timeline and Success Metrics

2026: Phase 1 — Legislative Passage, OAG Legacy Reprogramming, and OSSE Waitlist Elimination

2027: Phase 2 — Full 100% Pass-Through Launch, Debt Amnesty, and Co-op Food Retail Operations

2028: Phase 3 — Launch NCP Workforce Pipelines and Fully Restore Sovereign Baby Bonds

2029: Phase 4 — Achieve Deep Housing Stability and Universal Free Early Care across Wards 7/8

Project Phase	Implementation Milestone	Required Funding	Success Metrics & Key Performance Indicators
Phase 1 (2026)	Eliminate the Child Care Subsidy waitlist ; reprogram legacy child support enforcement software for pass-through.	\$14.6M (Subsidy) / \$300k (IT).	Zero families remaining on the childcare waitlist; legacy software fully updated.



RAISING THE STANDARDS

Child Support & Family Stability System

<p>Phase 2 (2027)</p>	<p>Enact 100% pass-through of current support and arrears ; construct two zero-rent cooperative grocery spaces in Wards 7/8.</p>	<p>\$63.2M (Subsidy) / \$15M (Capital).</p>	<p>100% of collected child support transferred directly to TANF families; first cooperative grocery store opened.</p>
<p>Phase 3 (2028)</p>	<p>Restore Baby Bonds with \$30M General Fund backing ; launch DOES/UDC noncustodial parent training programs.</p>	<p>\$30M (Baby Bonds) / \$5M (DOES).</p>	<p>100% of infants below 300% FPL enrolled in wealth trusts; 500 parents enrolled in job training.</p>
<p>Phase 4 (2029)</p>	<p>Expand TOPA tenant purchases ; achieve pay parity with DCPS teachers for all early childhood educators.</p>	<p>\$30M (TOPA) / \$82.2M (Pay Equity).</p>	<p>1,000 low-income units preserved under cooperative tenant ownership; full pay parity achieved citywide.</p>