1. What are your top 3 goals as US Representative in the next term?

My first goal returning as the US Representative is to achieve DC Statehood. With HR-51 passing the House for the second time in years, it is ever more crucial to have the Senate pass this legislation. Currently, 45 Democrats have co-sponsored S-51. My job is to help increase Senate support by meeting these holdout congressional members to increase co-sponsorship of the DC Statehood bill. We have raised local awareness for DC Statehood by engaging residents in innovative ways, including hosting our inaugural Supercar Rally 4 DC Statehood. We have increased state-level support by traveling to West Virginia, where my office worked with Minority Leader, Delegate Doug Skaff, to introduce a DC Statehood Resolution. We have spoken on conservative radio shows and knocked on doors to discuss our fight for equality.

My next goal is to cancel student debt. Currently, DC residents are the most indebted in the nation—owing an average of $55,000 in student loans. We are proud to have co-written a statement demanding Presidential and Congressional action to solve the American Student Debt Crisis. Student debt relief will improve the quality of life for DC residents by reducing financial stress and promote the potential for home ownership and business cultivation. Student debt cancellation is a social justice issue that DC residents are intimately affected by. As I continue to represent DC as the US Representative, I hold myself accountable to amplify our collective voices on the national stage.

Lastly, as the only elected healthcare professional in DC, I will continue to provide meaningful resources to improve our community public health. Our office established the Healthcare Providers in Policy program to gather a collective of expert healthcare providers to weigh-in on healthcare policy and procedures in the District. During our vaccine shortage in mid 2021, this collective reached out to the MD Department of Health to increase covid vaccine access reciprocity, which resulted in tens of thousands of DC residents getting their vaccination in close proximity to their homes who previously lacked options. Our office collaborates with Howard University College of Pharmacy to address the healthcare needs of those most marginalized. Together, we have partnered with the Brookland Manor Tenant Association in Ward 5 and will soon join forces with the Ward 8 Health Council. Our office is committed to preserving the health of DC residents as we march towards equality.
2. What are the most significant activities or efforts you have led in the last few years to promote DC Statehood?

In the past 2 years, I have dedicated myself to promote DC Statehood. Following my historic election in 2020, I directed all attention to our fight for DC Statehood. My office and I traveled to West Virginia, where we successfully introduced a DC Statehood resolution through the House of Delegates. My office hosts town hall meetings, conducts engaging Statehood events and uses our platform to fight for DC resident equality. My office will continue to conduct college student focus groups, where young people will be inspired to become DC Statehood champions who can amplify our fight for equality through their network.

3. Have you ever visited a Congressional Office on Capitol on behalf of DC Statehood effort?

I have visited plenty of Congressional offices on behalf of DC Statehood efforts. My first opportunity was in 2018, where I joined DC Vote and other residents for a lobby day. That day, I was able to talk to Democratic and Republican offices to find commonalities and opportunities to reach across the aisle. Since becoming the US Representative, I have met with Congressional members to encourage them to become vocal Statehood activists. This includes whipping Congressional votes to support DC Statehood.

4. How well does the Statehood Delegation collaborate on statehood strategy, and how can it be improved?

The Statehood Delegation collaborates physically and intellectually. A large percentage of my work has been inspired by the previous work done by Senators Paul Strauss and Michael Brown. Senator Strauss’ successful Iowans for DC Statehood coalition laid the foundation for my trip to West Virginia. My office and I have met with activists, media, and local elected officials to raise awareness for DC Statehood. Our office has also been inspired by the communication system built by Senator Brown through his radio station and op-ed publications. Inspired by his example, my office has been producing routine op-eds and press statements. As the DC Representative, I have been able to actively broadcast the work done in our office.
As DC emerges from the pandemic, there will be more opportunities for all members of the Statehood Delegation to collaborate—opportunities include rallies and town halls. With DC so close to its deserved statehood, it is critical for us to amplify our efforts.

5. How can grassroots organizations that support statehood best support the Statehood Delegation?

Grassroots efforts have been the backbone of the work completed in our office. Since 2021, we have collaborated with Planned Parenthood, Center for Common Ground, Howard University’s Student for DC Statehood, Common Defense, DC Voters for Animals and Veterans United for DC Statehood to promote DC Statehood. Members of each organization have reached out to their networks extending beyond DC to connect with their elected officials to support our fight for equality. We have had young people mobilize their peers via social media to get involved. Grassroots organizations are pivotal for our fight for DC Statehood and we would not be close to equality without their efforts.