

David B. Deitch Responses to GAYLAW Candidate Survey

1. How do you promote, encourage, and/or support the recruitment and retention of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender individuals in your firm, agency, or organization?

Because I work at a small firm (with only seven lawyers and a non-professional staff of two individuals), we do not have a regular flow of hiring such as that which occurs in larger firms, agencies and organizations. For that reason, these issues have not arisen since I joined the firm in January 2007.

2. Do you support the adoption of federal civil-rights legislation, including same-sex civil marriage, to protect gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender individuals from discrimination? If no, please explain.

I unequivocally support the notion that gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender individuals should enjoy legal protection from discrimination. I am not specifically familiar, though, with whether or not existing federal civil-rights legislation offers a sufficient basis on which gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender individuals may seek legal protection against and/or redress for discrimination, or whether new legislation is necessary for this purpose.

3. Which, if any, of the recommendations of the DC Bar's Task Force Report on Sexual Orientation and the Legal Workplace will you work to implement, and how will you do so?

I believe that the most important recommendations of the task force's report fall into two categories: (1) those that deal with raising the awareness of firm managers and attorneys about the potential for, and the need to avoid, discrimination and other unacceptable treatment of individuals in the workplace based on sexual orientation; and (2) those that deal with the need for written and widely publicized policies and education by firms regarding the need to avoid such conduct. As to the first category, I would encourage the Bar or other organizations to hold events designed to increase awareness of these issues – much the same as the training now mandated in the federal government and elsewhere regarding sexual harassment policies. As to the second, I would encourage the Bar or other organizations to suggest “best practices” to firms, agencies and other organizations regarding the institution, publicizing and enforcement of appropriate policies designed to address these forms of discrimination. I would also encourage the Bar's nominating committees to continue to seek and/or be alert to the opportunity to nominate gay and lesbian individuals to positions within the Bar.

4. Will you work to ensure that all member benefit programs sponsored or endorsed by the D.C. Bar Ass'n (i.e., health insurance, life insurance, disability insurance) include benefits for domestic partners?

Because I do believe, as a principle, that domestic partners should enjoy such benefits, I would support such inclusion. To the extent that there are obstacles or objections thereto, the Bar should study them carefully and determine whether its member benefit programs may be changed or adapted in an appropriate way that permits the benefits of those programs to include domestic partners.

5. Would you support a D.C. Bar policy that requires all companies with which the D.C. Bar contracts to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity?

I am not sufficiently familiar with the contracting by the DC Bar to take a firm position regarding this issue.

6. Please give up to three suggestions as to the role the D.C. Bar can and should play in addressing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, and in promoting hospitable workplace environments for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender legal professionals.

(1) Provide firms, agencies and other organizations with “best practices” on how they may institute, enforce and publicize appropriate non-discrimination policies.

(2) Continue to select gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender individuals for positions of responsibility and leadership within the bar as a way of including the experiences of those individuals in the mix of decision-making by Bar leadership, and to provide role models for similar individuals in the legal community.

7. Please provide any additional information you care to offer our members in support of your candidacy.