



For Immediate Release

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***DC Council At-Large Candidate Lisa Gore Statement on
Re-imagining a Modernized Vocational Education Program for
DC Public and Charter Schools***

Washington, D.C. – The District of Columbia is not unlike other locations across the country that are seeing a rise in community violence. We, however, are in a unique position to address this challenge from the perspective of repairing generational harm, community disinvestment, and investing in our most precious asset - our youth. The Black Women for Justice (BWFJ) is a Washington, D.C.-based organization committed to working on issues that negatively harm the Black community. At-Large Candidate Lisa Gore proudly endorses BWFJ's efforts to reimagine vocational education in D.C. Public and Charter Schools and incorporate their ideas and goals for vocational education into her education and public safety platforms.

Traditional vocational education programs were closed in D.C. in the mid-1990s when communities were undergoing significant crime and violence. This left few options for children in traditional school programs. Today, we're facing similar issues while simultaneously navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, this announcement comes at a critical time when discussions focus on public safety and economic and racial justice.

"I believe, as the BWFJ believes, that we must do everything we can to address the root causes of violence in our communities and give our children the best possible options to succeed in life. We need real options to save our children from going to jail or having an early death. By creating opportunities to learn skilled trades early on in their educational careers, we can expand their career opportunities, help them start on a pathway to entrepreneurship, and give them hope that they can have a better future," said Gore.

The D.C. Federation of Citizens Associations also endorsed BWFJ's efforts to introduce skill-based vocational education programs into the middle and high school curriculum. Candidate Gore's modernized vocational education platform calls for preparing a broad array of District youth to be workforce ready, earn competitive wages, and have all the tools needed to start business opportunities upon graduation. She is explicitly calling for:

- Vocational education programming that begins early in a student's academic career, specifically in middle school and continuing through high school;
- Dedicated skill-based vocational centers located in the District's most under-served Wards;



FOR DC COUNCIL AT-LARGE

- An expansion in the number of skill-based trades that are currently offered in D.C. Public School's Career and Technical Education programs, including "green" trade skills like solar installation;
- Integrating entrepreneurship requirements that enable students to establish businesses;
- Paying students while learning and participating in apprenticeship programs to address the wealth gap;
- Pathways that lead to industry-recognized certification before graduation;
- Streamlining business licensing requirements that are completed before graduation; and
- Exempting participating students from business licensing fees.

"A good vocational education program should provide our students with three things: credentials and experience, guaranteed income while learning and employment opportunities upon graduating, and a path to owning their own business. My dad was a skilled tradesman. He first learned the technical requirements of the construction trade, and at a young age, he started his own small construction company specializing in concrete services. It allowed him to buy a brick home for our family, where we lived in a solid working-class neighborhood. A modernized vocational education program is a generational investment in our youth and their future families that will help close the economic wealth gap," said Gore.

"...It should not be difficult for elected and government officials and the community-at-large to rightly conclude that investment in education is a more reasonable, effective and efficient way to increase public safety and ensure a better quality of life for the currently underserved and vulnerable populations who are both perpetrators and victims of various levels and types of crime," said a BWFJ spokeswoman. Candidate Gore's plan calls on the District to take intentional steps to return a modernized vocational education program to our schools and give the District's most vulnerable children a more just outcome in life.

Lisa Gore is a candidate for the D.C. Council At-Large Democratic seat and the current Vice-Chair of ANC 3/4G. She is a retired Special Agent in Charge with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General with extensive experience in law enforcement and housing policy oversight. To learn more about her plan for vocational education in D.C. Public and Charter Schools visit: GoreforDC.com.

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