

December 30, 2019

To: Phil Mendelson
Chairman
Council of District of Columbia

Natalie Hopkinson, Ph.D.
Mayoral nominee, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities
NHopkinson@gmail.com 202-352-3160

Dear Chairman Mendelson,

It is my honor to be considered as a mayoral nominee to the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. I have attached my written testimony I plan to deliver at the hearing 10 a.m. January 9, 2020. In addition, I have answered the following questions **in RED** per your request:

1. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting any business with the District Government in which you have a beneficial interest valued in excess of \$5,000, including publicly traded stock.

NONE.

2. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting any business (including consulting) with the District Government from which you or your immediate family have received (or are receiving) income for services rendered in excess of \$1,000 during the past two years.

NONE.

3. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting business with the District Government in which you or any member of your immediate family serves as an officer, director, partner, or agent. Also list the position(s) held, a brief description of the entity, and any other pertinent details.

NONE.

4. Please provide the name of any lender and the amount of liability for each outstanding liability borrowed by you or any member of your immediate family in excess of \$5,000. Do not include loans from a federal or state insured or regulated financial institution, or from any business enterprise regularly engaged in the business of providing revolving credit or installment accounts.

NONE.

5. Please list the location of all real property located in the District of Columbia in which you have an interest with a fair market value in excess of \$5,000.

My primary residence that I own with my husband is located:

57 Randolph Place NW, Washington, D.C. 20001

6. Please list all professional and occupational licenses held by you.

NONE.

7. Please list any professional organizations of which you are currently a member.

Caribbean Studies Association

Association for Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication

8. Please list all boards and commissions connected with the District government on which you are or have been a member, and include the term of service for each.

NONE.

9. Please list any other boards (e.g. Boards of Directors of a non-profit) on which you are a member.

NONE.

10. Do you have any outstanding liability for taxes, fees, or other payments to the District, federal, or other state or local governments, either contested or uncontested? If so, please provide documentation of attempts to pay the amount owed or to resolve the disputed claim.

NO.

11. Do you or any member of your immediate family have any interest, financial or otherwise, that may directly or indirectly pose a conflict of interest for you in performance of your duties as a member of the Commission?

NO.

12. Please describe any local political activity (i.e. the District of Columbia local elections or campaigns) that you have engaged in over the past five years, including any campaign contributions to a local candidate or political action committee.

NONE.

13. Are you registered with any local, state, or federal government to lobby? If so, list the jurisdiction(s) in which you are registered.

NO.

14. Do you understand how much time will be required of you to serve on the Commission and do you commit to spend that time?

YES.

15. Why have you agreed to serve, and how do you plan to help the Commission fulfill its role and mission during your time on the Commission? Include in your answer what you believe should be the priorities of the Commission and specific challenges you see for the agency.

I believe this nomination creates an opportunity to close some gaps across our city. The world of the arts is often an intimidating and rarified space, a playground for the elite. Then there is the actual art that everyday people do in their lives. If confirmed, my mission for serving on the Commission on the Arts and Humanities would be the Akan notion of Sankofa: critically examine the past, while looking to the future. If confirmed, my biggest priority will be looking at what the board has done well, and then learning how to build upon that success. I see the most important work that policy makers can do is to find ways that our institutions can be the most responsive to the needs of everyday people. I seek to make a more inclusive institution that speaks to groups that have been left out of the conversation.

16. Please discuss any past and present experiences not already mentioned that you believe are relevant to support your appointment as a member of the Commission.

Currently, I am an assistant professor in the Department of Communication, Culture and Media Studies at Howard University; as well as, a fellow at the Interactivity Foundation, a nonprofit organization that works to engage citizens in the exploration and development of possibilities for public policy. As a fellow, I directed a project called “The Future of the Arts & Society.” I have also spent the past 25 years writing about the arts, cultural history, and issues of race and gender and society. I have been a staff writer, editor, and culture critic and columnist at the *Washington Post*, *The Root*, and *Huffington Post*, and have academic publications with Duke University Press, *Communication, Culture and Critique*, and *Journalism Practice*.

My book, *Go-Go Live: The Musical Life and Death of a Chocolate City*, an ethnography of Washington, D.C.’s go-go music, political economy, and culture, was published in 2012—the same year Chuck Brown, the “Godfather of Go-Go,” unfortunately passed away. In the years since, I have continued to research and lecture on go-go music and have worked with the go-go community to protect and support its legacy. My most recent book, *A Mouth is Always Muzzled: Six Dissidents, Five Continents and the Art of Resistance*, a global narrative about art and resistance, was longlisted for the PEN/America 2019 PEN/Diamonstein-Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay.

Thanks so much. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Best,



NATALIE HOPKINSON