

DSA's Janeese Lewis George seeks DC mayor's office after Bowser declines fourth term

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On November 25 current mayor of Washington D.C., Muriel Bowser (Democratic), announced she would not seek a fourth term.

The race for D.C.'s next mayor became crowded from the moment Bowser made her announcement, with several current members of the D.C. Council among those joining the primary. Similar to the recent New York City mayoral election, the winner of the primary, set for June 16, 2026, would almost certainly be elected mayor in the heavily Democratic city.

Among the first to declare her candidacy was Democrat Janeese Lewis George, currently representing Ward 4 in the D.C. Council. George, described in the bourgeois media as a "democratic socialist," was a member of the Metro D.C. Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) upon her election in 2020 and was endorsed again by the organization prior to the 2024 elections that won her a second term.

On Friday, the Metro D.C. DSA Facebook page reported favorably on George's candidacy, stating that George "has a strong track record of standing with workers, tenants and D.C. communities." George's record, however, is that of a standard capitalist politician.

A former D.C. prosecutor who ran in the 2020 council election on a platform of defunding the police, George voted in favor of the draconian SECURE DC crime bill. At a Ward 4 candidates' forum in April 2024, she pleaded with her right-wing critics,

It wasn't that we were against police officers; it was Black people saying, "We don't want to be murdered." The notion...does not mean we don't respect and love our officers and support them.

True to its opportunist ways, the Metro D.C. DSA dutifully scrubbed any mention of the word "police" from its 2024 George endorsement statement.

George also voted in favor of providing \$1 billion in public funds for the NFL's Washington Commanders new stadium, further burnishing her big-business credentials. George's pro-capitalist politics have not received a single rebuke from the Metro D.C. DSA. In the 2024 presidential race, she loyally campaigned for Vice President Kamala Harris even as Harris made clear she would continue the genocide in Gaza started by Biden.

The role of the DSA, when all the left-sounding phrases and platitudes are peeled back, is to herd workers and youth back into the waiting arms of the Democratic Party. There is no greater warning as to the organization's true character than its behavior following the election of Zohran Mamdani as the mayor-elect of New York City.

Mamdani, a member of the DSA NYC chapter, sought to placate his right-wing critics by promising to retain arch-Zionist and billionaire heiress Jessica Tisch as NYPD commissioner. Tisch has utilized a mass surveillance program against New Yorkers. In mid-November, Mamdani attended a meeting at the White House on November 21 in which the "democratic socialist" shook hands with Trump and stood silent while Trump defended his raids on immigrant workers.

George's administration would operate in an even more slavish manner toward the Trump administration if she were elected to lead the District of Columbia, where the federal government's control over funds is routinely used as an excuse for total capitulation.

Following Bowser's announcement that she would not seek re-election, George posted effusive praise of the outgoing mayor on her social media profiles:

Mayor Bowser has served the District faithfully — first as an ANC Commissioner, then as a Councilmember, and now as a three-term Mayor. She has guided our city through difficult times, secured important investments, and worked hard to strengthen our communities.

DC is a place that honors and celebrates its leaders. We will always be grateful for Mayor Bowser’s devoted public service and impactful leadership.

What is the “record of public service” and “impactful leadership” George praises?

Upon becoming mayor, Bowser promised to respond to the housing crisis, but did no such thing. Washington D.C. is one of the costliest places to live in the United States; the median rental price for a one-bedroom apartment in the city is \$2,210, according to Apartment List. J.P. Morgan reported four out of every five low-income renters spends at least half their income on rent.

Beginning her climb as an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner before joining the D.C. Council in 2007, Bowser made her career in the shadow of mayors Adrian Fenty and Vincent Gray, whose administrations waged a relentless, destructive war on public education and social services. Fenty and his education enforcer Michelle Rhee “fixed” schools by closing them, purging staff, expanding charters and imposing merit?pay schemes that reduced education to corporate metrics while deepening inequality and opening new avenues for graft. Gray dutifully sustained this big?business agenda, sitting on growing surpluses as housing and unemployment crises sharpened, until his own career was torpedoed by a scandal involving hundreds of thousands of dollars in illegal campaign contributions.

In her announcement, Bowser spoke of standing tall against “bullies who threaten our very autonomy while preserving home rule.” Bowser, however, will be remembered most for her collaborations with the biggest “bully” of them all—Trump, including a meeting with the president last December. Rather than strongly opposing Trump, she has sought to find common ground with the would-be dictator.

As a “law-and-order” mayor, she signed into law the SECURE DC omnibus bill—passed almost unanimously by a Democratic Party-dominated D.C. Council in March 2024—advocating for a crackdown on the poorest layers of

the city and criminalizing poverty. She raised no objections to Trump’s deployment of National Guard troops in an Oversight Committee meeting last August; indeed, she praised the deployment for reducing crime, despite crime experiencing a downturn in the months leading up to the deployment.

Bowser made Washington, ravaged by an economic downturn due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more palatable to business. She spoke of “taking big swings to keep D.C. teams in D.C.” through sweetheart deals made with sports owners, setting aside \$1.5 billion to renovate Capital One Arena and build a new RFK Stadium. On the other side of the economic ladder, she ordered the clearing-off of homeless encampments throughout the city, most notoriously at McPherson Square in Northwest Washington in February 2023, when 70 people were cleared out of their tents, with their belongings destroyed.

On immigration, Bowser silently consented to Trump’s anti-migrant pogrom. While Bowser spoke of D.C. being a “sanctuary city” prior to Trump’s second term, she has since advocated for a repeal of the city’s sanctuary city law, in line with numerous Democratic mayors in major cities pushing anti-immigration laws and policies.

As a *Washington Post* editorial board statement on the day of Bowser’s resignation put it, “the Democrat put the capital city before her own political ambitions.” Here, “the city” is defined not as a diverse city of working class people, but the city of business interests, corporations and the affluent.

Under this cloud, Bowser announced she would not run for another term as mayor, with her final term to end in January 2027. As the record has shown, however, the departure of a mayor and the policies that came with it does not mean those policies are a thing of the past.

For the working class in D.C. and around the world, the task is not to elect left-talking capitalist politicians but to establish political and organization independence from all agencies of capitalism and their pseudo-left defenders.



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