

**Male Speaker 1: David Schwartzman**

**Female Speaker 1: Denise Rolark Barnes**

**Female Speaker 2: Cecily E. Collier-Montgomery**

**[O/V]: Overlapping Voices**

**[U/A]: Unintelligible audio**

[00:00:00 START RECORDING DC At Large Member of the Council Debate #2 Hosted by the  
Office of Campaign Finance]

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David Schwartzman: Hello.

Denise Rolark Barnes: - hosted by the DC Office Campaign Finance. I'm Denise Rolark Barnes,  
publisher and owner of the Washington Informer, and I will serve as the moderator

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Denise Rolark Barnes: for tonight's discussion or debate. Due to a last-minute addition, we're  
hosting the second debate to give all of the candidates an opportunity to answer questions  
and to share their views with their voters. Tonight we will hear from David Schwartzman,  
a candidate competing for the office of DC Council member at-large. We encourage  
members of the public to submit questions via the website, [dcdebates.com](http://dcdebates.com), and to  
participate online using the hashtag

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Denise Rolark Barnes: #DCDebates. Before we get started, let's hear from the Director of the  
Office of Campaign Finance, Cecily Montgomery.

Cecily E. Collier-Montgomery: Good evening, welcome to the 2022 DC Fall Debate, I'm Cecily  
Montgomery, director of the Office of Campaign Finance. The 2022 DC Debates are the  
third slated debates under the fair elections program, started in 2018, the FEP is a  
voluntary,

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Cecily E. Collier-Montgomery: public financing program, operated by the Office of Campaign Finance, to support candidates for local political office in the district of Columbia. All FEP participating candidates, for city wide races, are required to take part in the debates. It is our hope that these debates will help the public to learn more about the candidates, their positions and policy platforms. We want to take a moment to

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Cecily E. Collier-Montgomery: thank our partner organizations and the candidates for participating in the process. Thank you for joining us in our mission to help inform DC Voters about the fair elections program candidates and their positions. To learn more about the Office of Campaign Finance or the 2022 DC debates, please visit [dcdebates.com](http://dcdebates.com). the debates will remain

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Cecily E. Collier-Montgomery: on the website through election day November 8<sup>th</sup>, for those who could not watch or listen live this evening. Thank you for your support and with that, lets meet our candidates.

Denise Rolark Barnes: And thank you, Mrs. Montgomery for those remarks. The candidate for tonight's debate is David Schwartzman. Here are the ground rules for tonight's debate: you'll have one minute for an opening statement, 60 seconds for

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Denise Rolark Barnes: an answer to a question, and, well, I guess you don't need 30 seconds for a rebuttal, because you won't need it. You will have one minute for closing statements. With that, we will proceed with your opening statement, Mr. Schwartzman.

David Schwartzman: Yeah, thank you so much for this opportunity. I'm David Schwartzman, the candidate of DC state Green Party, the only ballot status party which does not accept funding from the corporate developer

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David Schwartzman: sector. I'm a retired Howard University professor, a climate scientist and human rights activist. I first ran for office in DC in 1998, and several times since, and my priority then and now is the elimination of child poverty, in our nation's first human rights city, which is an achievable goal, given a more than adequate tax space. For more than 20 years, I have advocated for

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David Schwartzman: progressive DC tax structure, for more taxes paid by our wealthy residents, and last summer the people of DC won a major victory, with the hike in the tax rates paid by wealthy residents. And this, this as a result, low-income residents will get a big increase in their DC Earned Income Tax Credit [O/V] [U/A].

Denise Rolark Barnes: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Schwartzman, your one-minute time is up.

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David Schwartzman: Okay. Thank you. More for the closing statement. Thank you.

Denise Rolark Barnes: So... Alright. So, we're going to move on to our opening question. Many DC voters and often those who run for this office understand the role and responsibilities of a council member, and in this case and at-large member differently. Please share what you believe your role will be and what constituents should expect from you when you win the seat.

David Schwartzman: Yes,

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David Schwartzman: indeed. Well, of course, an at-large council members will represent the whole DC, all of DC. And I intend to do so, and I intend to use the full resources of my office, the full resources, including my salary, which, because I don't need the salary, I have social security and a pension from Howard University. I will use it for, to organize with, in

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David Schwartzman: collaboration with the cutting-edge groups in DC that are fighting for a more just DC, to eliminate the huge racial and economic disparities we have in DC. Thank you.

Denise Rolark Barnes: Thank you. Mr. Schwartzman, recently the DC council approved an emergency creation of the office of migrant services in response to the high numbers of migrants

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Denise Rolark Barnes: who landed in DC in the last six months. Some advocates have expressed concerns that the law doesn't offer the same protections afforded to citizens experiencing homelessness. What would you put in place, or how do you plan to balance the needs of migrants, sent from other states in the long-term and the needs of the unhoused in DC?

David Schwartzman: Very good question. Well,

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David Schwartzman: I think we owe it to the migrants coming in who were dumped on us by the governors of Arizona and Texas; however, we should be treating them with equal regard as our own homeless. And DC is not adequately housing the homeless now. In a matter of fact, the Washington legal clinic of the homeless had a critique of this bill and supported an amendment

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David Schwartzman: which unfortunately failed, but basically their objection which I share is that it should be amended to protect the rights of the immigrants and all people experiencing homelessness, and I invite viewers to go to the Washington Legal Clinic of the Homeless website and see the details, of what should be amended. Thank you.

Denise Rolark Barnes: Alright, thank you. We're going to talk a little about crime.

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Denise Rolark Barnes: We know that DC residents have identified gun violence and crime as their top concern and that they want the mayor and the council to focus on this more. What new ideas have you, do you have, to fight crime and address the interconnected issues related to crime in the city?

David Schwartzman: Yes, and I agree this is a vital concern to all residents. First of all, I think we need to address the roots

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David Schwartzman: of the problem, and that is, first of all, poverty and child poverty, the traumatized children that live and low, in families that are experiencing poverty. Violence is a public health issue and should be addressed in that regard. And of course, the near act, which is kind of boosting the budget should be vigorously promoted, and also the recommendations of the DC

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David Schwartzman: auditor, which call for the mayor to actually create bodies that were required to enhance the operation of the near act. Finally, we need to address the abuse of police, some police in harassing young black youth, and even, killing them. And there's two sorry a record of that happening, and I, I'd support a civilian review board,

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David Schwartzman: elected with subpoena power to address that issue. And I know I'm [O/V].

Denise Rolark Barnes: Thank you.

David Schwartzman: Thank you.

Denise Rolark Barnes: Thank you. In that mode, you know, the DC Council also voted earlier this year to gradually remove police from schools, and to replace them with other resource persons. If that bill was introduced today and you were on the city council, would you support it?

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Denise Rolark Barnes: If so, why? And if not, why not?

David Schwartzman: Yes, I would indeed support it. I think there needs to be some security for students going into school, so they don't bring in knives and guns, yes. But we don't need police inside of school, and I agree with the other council members, the sitting council members who also said yes, they would have

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David Schwartzman: supported that bill as well.

Denise Rolark Barnes: Thank you. Another, of course, very hot topics for Washingtonians, one of uh, the second highest priorities of course, has to deal with rent and affordable housing. The District of Columbia has very high rents and voters are looking for some type of action that the council will take to address affordability of rental housing

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Denise Rolark Barnes: as well as housing in general. What would you do as a council member to address those issues?

David Schwartzman: Yes, as you indicated the rents are too high. Market rents are not affordable for a majority of renters in DC. That's a reality, the housing production trust fund is a, I think, largely failed mechanism to create affordable housing. Yes, some is created.

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David Schwartzman: Not enough for low-income, as [U/A] have pointed out, the developers violate the law, and they're not being held accountable. So, we need to increase the minimum for low-income first. But we need to move very fast to a different model, housing is a human right. Decommodifying housing, the provision of housing for social housing, and community land trust. Denise Lewis George's housing bill, green new deal housing bill, is

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David Schwartzman: a big step in that direction for social housing, and I certainly support that, and she's my council person, by the way, I live in ward four.

Denise Rolark Barnes: As a climate scientist, you are imminently qualified to deal with the most important issue, facing humanity. How can your skills help DC in particular? And a second question is [O/V].

David Schwartzman: Well, I'm glad you mentioned that [O/V]. I'm sorry.

Denise Rolark Barnes: Go ahead.

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Denise Rolark Barnes: Go ahead. No. I'll follow up. I'll follow up. Go ahead.

David Schwartzman: Yes, indeed, I am a climate scientist and environmental scientist, but we need to connect the dots between environmental rights, human rights, economic, and social human rights. They're interrelated. For example, to curb the emissions of carbon greenhouse gas emissions, such as even methane leaking out of the street from

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David Schwartzman: pipes carrying natural gas, we have to curb this, but at the same time we need to curb the vehicle traffic in DC, because it's not only a source of carbon emissions, it's a source of harmful air pollution, which impacts the young asthma, and

impacts a very, the older folk, with dementia. There's research to show that connection, and cancer and cardiovascular

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David Schwartzman: disease. So, we need to connect the dots and confronting this challenge, and we will improve the quality of life of everyone. And one idea, which I support is [O/V].

Denise Rolark Barnes: Mr. Schwartzman, I need to move on to the to the next question. Thank you.

David Schwartzman: Thank you.

Denise Rolark Barnes: And we appreciate the fact that the audience is submitting questions, so these are questions coming from our viewers.

David Schwartzman: Excellent.

Denise Rolark Barnes: And the second question is why do you think DC needs a public bank?

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David Schwartzman: I love that. That's a nice question. Because I've been on the steering committee of the DC Public Banking Center for over seven years. We did have a feasibility study that was paid from the DC budget. It's not too bad, but we need to re-energize this project, and if you put me in office I am certainly committed to do so. Why? Because right now our revenue in fines

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David Schwartzman: that are collected, by the way, fines should be calibrated to income, not be the same for everyone, but they are being banked in Wall Street Banks now. They're not doing us good. So, a public bank would hold publicly accountable Bank, independent of politicians, would hold this revenue and partner with local banks and credit unions to promote, for example, social housing, green jobs, and

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David Schwartzman: other benefits for the people of DC. And that's why we need a public bank;

North Dakota has one. Other cities and states are really looking keenly into this. So-

Denise Rolark Barnes: Thank you. Thank you.

David Schwartzman: I think it's very important. Thank you.

Denise Rolark Barnes: One of the points that the other candidates mentioned was the need to provide affordable housing for district workers. Police officers,

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Denise Rolark Barnes: firefighters, schoolteachers. What would you do? Do you support that idea? And as a council member, what would you do to make sure that became a reality?

David Schwartzman: Well, I do support the idea, and I think the mechanisms that I already mentioned, social housing, community land trusts, could well serve to fulfill that role of housing of these employees. And attracting

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David Schwartzman: people, you know, to live in DC rather than the suburbs. Because if they live in the suburbs they're not paying income tax to DC. If they live here, according to home rule, of course, they are compelled to pay income tax, and income tax needs to be progressive. So, social housing is a mixed income housing, but it requires that the rent be no more than 30% of household income,

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David Schwartzman: so it's a mix of income and it could produce enough revenue to maintain the property and people can save money as a result, especially low income, to then consider getting their own home, with partnership with the government as well.

Denise Rolark Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Schwartzman. Believe it or not, we've actually come to the end of this debate. We want to thank you for taking time, for being with us, the

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Denise Rolark Barnes: question and answer portion of the evening is over. And we will now provide you with an opportunity to give a closing statement. Remember you have one minute to do so.

David Schwartzman: Yes, thank you very much. I'm not really debating anyone here. By the way, I'm a father, husband, a grandfather, but that's not reason to vote for me. Okay? That's not a good reason. Why you should consider voting for me? One of your two votes, is that I will be

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David Schwartzman: a fearless and vigorous fighter for human rights to eliminate the racial and economic disparities in our community, and I say that I will use the full resource of my office to make that possible, and my slogan is "For the many, not for the few." "For the many, not the few." So, that is really what I stand on, and I'm not- I'm committed

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David Schwartzman: to end the displacement of long-term residents in DC, and to have a truly equitable city to move to real equality in DC, so we don't have child poverty, we don't have homelessness and so forth. Thank you.

Denise Rolark Barnes: Mr. Schwartzman, thank you very much and that concludes our debate. So, to learn more about how to vote in this election, visit [dcboe.org](http://dcboe.org).

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Denise Rolark Barnes: Again that's [dcboe.org](http://dcboe.org). And remember to visit [dcdebates.com](http://dcdebates.com) to watch this debate and others in their entirety. Thank you to all of our candidates, our community partners, and the Office of Campaign Finance for hosting tonight's debate. Thank you Mr. Schwartzman for being here. Have a safe evening and goodnight.

[00:20:35 END RECORDING DC At Large Member of the Council Debate #2 Hosted by the  
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