Sharp middle D on Saxophones

Saxophone: One of the worst notes on the saxophone for intonation is middle D - it is always sharp. Actually, the underlying problem is that the low and middle Ds are more than an octave apart. Instrument manufacturers adjust the low D to be in tune and the middle D sharp. There are two ways to improve this: 1) add the low B on the middle D to lower the pitch (clumsy except for long notes) or 2) (my favorite) lower the C key. This will make the low D flat, but one can add the low C# to raise this pitch. I personally play MANY more middle Ds than low Ds. Since one of these notes will require a corrective fingering, I would rather deal with the more infrequent low D than the very frequent middle D. Sometimes this adjustment will not make the low D so flat that a corrective fingering is needed. This is the case with my instruments.

To lower the low C, there are three ways.

1. Many saxophones have a screw adjustment on the low Eb-C-B-Bb key guards. This is why the adjustment is there! Simply screw in the screw on the top of the low C key guard. Don’t go too far or the screw will fall out.
2. Get a circular felt from your local repairman. Cut off a small piece with a single edge razor blade and use super glue **gel** to stick it on the bottom of the current felt. Of course the felt can be completely replaced to look a little better. You’ll have to experiment if you don’t have an adjustment screw.
3. “Down and dirty but will work” method: pile up layers of masking tape on the low C key under the felt for the desired amount needed to lower the key.