

Our Revolution Maryland (OR-MD), Baltimore County Candidates Questionnaire

1. Please state the position you are running for. How does your experience, along with your life experiences, qualify you for the position?

I am running for Baltimore County Executive.

Growing up in the shadow of a steel mill, I learned at an early age what good jobs meant to my community. I witnessed firsthand the detrimental effects the mill's closure had on my friends and family.

I am a proud product of the Baltimore County school system, graduating from Sparrows Point High school. After being the first in my family to earn a college degree, I returned home to Dundalk to be a social studies and special education teacher at Patapsco High School. I saw firsthand how kids struggled to learn when they were at a disadvantage.

As a legislator, I established a strong record of progressive leadership for Baltimore County, standing by my convictions and never forgetting my working-class roots. In Annapolis, I served as the Chairman of the Baltimore County House Delegation – the youngest person ever elected to that position. As a legislator, I fought or secured passage for EARN Maryland, Paid Sick Leave, Medicaid expansion, increasing the minimum wage, and expanding Prevailing Wage in school construction in Baltimore County.

I just recently finished my Doctorate in Public Policy at UMBC. I currently work at SAS Institute where he helps inform state and local government with sophisticated data analytics. I remain deeply involved in my community, education policy and philanthropy around the county.

I live in Dundalk with my wife, Marisa, and our daughter, Daria. We are active in our church and maintain strong ties as volunteers in our community and across Baltimore County.

As a new father, I'm focused on the future of our county. As executive, I'll be focused on our future, building a better Baltimore County for all families and children, including my own.

2. What will be the principles or values that guide your public service?

Growing up, I learned the values of hard work, community, family, and faith. For years in the classroom and in the state legislature I fought to make things better. As a new father, I am focused on our future -- that's why I'm running for Baltimore County executive.

We cannot afford to simply improve county government; Baltimore County must lead. It has to work for you. It needs to be transparent, accessible, and connected.

As executive, I will be hands-on, active, and engaged as your biggest advocate -- building a better Baltimore County together. As County Executive, I will be guided by my core principles: relationship matters; we must promote an equality of opportunity; we must leverage innovation and technology to create jobs and better serve our citizens; diversity is our strength, and we must uphold and fight for our shared Democratic values.

CIVIL RIGHTS

3. Do you support the Trust Act? (Legislation that prevents a State/local Government Agent from using public resources for civil immigration enforcement; prevents law enforcement officials from stopping, arresting or detaining an individual simply to find out immigration or citizenship status; prevents the State from creating a registry for the purpose of immigration enforcement, and prevents state law enforcement officers from being deputized as immigration officers.)

Yes

I trust the expertise of our local law enforcement and I support the current County Executive's executive order on this matter. Under an Olszewski administration, we will endeavor to ensure that Baltimore County is safe and welcoming to all of our residents.

4. Do you support Gov. Hogan's executive order to bar state business with companies that boycott Israel, that is, his order opposing recent BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions)?

The conflicts in the Middle East are very complex. While I appreciate the Governor's sentiment in his executive order, we must be very careful about having local governments wade into foreign policy.

5. Do you oppose voluntary state and local cooperation with federal immigration enforcement beyond that required by Constitutionally-mandated federal law? Where do you stand on efforts to sign a 287g agreement with the Federal government for the Baltimore County Department of Corrections?

I trust the expertise of our local law enforcement and I support the current County Executive's executive order on this matter and I oppose efforts to establish a 287g agreement with the Federal government. Under an Olszewski administration, we will endeavor to ensure that Baltimore County is safe and welcoming to all of our residents.

6. What will you do to promote racial integration in Baltimore County?

For starters, Baltimore County needs to enact the HOME Act so that we can stop discrimination in Baltimore county based on the source of income. We also need to encourage smart growth & housing policy. If we can increase fairness in housing, we can also deconcentrate poverty, which will alleviate crime.

We must also take bold action on school integration. As outlined in a recent expose by [The Baltimore Sun](#) entitled "[Bridging the Divide](#)," Baltimore County continues to move the in wrong direction -- as we become a more diverse population, our schools are actually becoming more segregated.

Diversity is our strength in Baltimore County, which means it is essential that we create a more equitable and diverse government as well.

EDUCATION

7. Do you support legislation providing free tuition at community colleges, vocational and trade schools and will you commit to using new tax revenue from those sectors better able to afford it?

Yes

I've made expanding access to community college a central piece of my campaign. CCBC should be at the center of increasing employment opportunities for the residents of our county. There are many high-paying jobs that are having trouble connecting to candidates for those jobs. If we can increase attendance and assistance for people in our community colleges and trade schools, we can match people to jobs that require skills and training, and help move the local economy forward. As County Executive, I'll replicate the [Employment Advancement Right Now \(EARN\)](#) program that I created at the state legislature here in Baltimore County, leveraging our community colleges and putting people to work.

8. There is a deeply concerning persistent achievement gap in Maryland public schools that affects a large number of students in economically disadvantaged communities and minority communities. What will you do to help close that gap?

As a public school teacher in Baltimore County, I saw incredible inequity in our school system and I know that we need to level the playing field. One step I'll take to address that inequity is establishing universal prekindergarten in Baltimore County. Research demonstrates that universal pre-K has sweeping benefits for children of all backgrounds, but especially so for those from disadvantaged communities.

Providing universal school breakfast and lunch is another critical step. Children can't learn on an empty stomach. We need to make sure children are fed -- without stigma -- so that they can thrive in our schools. Additionally, we'll increase the county's investment in counselors and social workers at our schools, so that students have a strong support system to help them grow and succeed.

Infrastructure is another key focus. Frequently, disadvantaged communities lack adequate school infrastructure. In communities like Lansdowne, schools are literally sinking into the ground. In others, like Dundalk, schools lack air-conditioning. I'll make sure that we're sending all of our students to the schools they deserve. We need to bring our school infrastructure into the 21st century.

Finally, I'll embark on a robust Community School program -- meeting the whole needs not only of our students, but of their families as well. We must be willing to invest more meaningfully in our educational system if we want to meaningfully tackle our persistent achievement gap.

9. What would you do to improve the state of Baltimore County public schools?

Public education is the foundation for strong communities. It our responsibility to make equitable and effective investments so that every Baltimore County child is positioned for success. Every student and educator deserves a modern, air-conditioned classroom. We will continue to take the fight to improve our schools to Annapolis, and will advocate for our own 21st Century School Investment program that goes far beyond air-conditioning. Parents should be proud sending their children to any county school.

Consultants recently told the Kirwan Commission that Maryland's school system is underfunded by nearly \$3 billion, or about \$2 million per school. As a former delegate and chair of the Baltimore County delegation, I'll leverage my relationships in Annapolis to make sure that our schools receive the funding they need. With control of the county budget, I'll ensure that our schools receive the funding they need to adequately serve our students. Baltimore County Public Schools won't be underfunded on my watch.

We should invest in our school system's workforce, too -- from our counselors and social workers to our teachers and professional development staff. We need to reward and retain our best teachers, and we need to make sure our students have the support they need to excel.

HEALTH CARE

10. Do you support a Maryland single-payer universal health care system, in absence of a national plan, to establish a single standard of quality, therapeutic care to all residents in the state? What do you see as the greatest obstacles to enacting single-payer health-care legislation in Maryland? If you favor such a plan, what can you do to overcome those obstacles?

Yes

In 2007, I voted to expand healthcare coverage to nearly 100,000 more Marylanders by expanding increasing access to Medicaid. We can and must do more.

Maryland's charter puts us in a unique position to provide accessible, quality healthcare to our residents. In the absence of federal action on healthcare, I would support Medicare for all on the statewide level here in Maryland -- because I believe the Baltimore County Executive has an obligation to advocate for all of our citizens, many of whom remain without affordable health care.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

11. What is your position on the bail reform imposed by the Maryland Court of Appeals? Do you support eliminating money bail, or other reform to prevent having anyone spend time in jail solely because of inability to pay bail?

Yes

I believe that we need to reform our bail system so that the only people who are jailed awaiting trial are there because they are a public safety threat, not because they couldn't afford bail. The current system of money for release from jail has had negative effects for communities all over Baltimore County and it must be reformed.

12. What is your position on community policing?

I support the community policing model. When our law enforcement officers live in the communities they serve, they are more invested in the health and safety of that community. We need to help foster a partnership between residents and police.

ENVIRONMENT

13. How would you help move Maryland to a 50% clean energy economy by 2030?

We will set a goal to get Baltimore County off the grid by 2030. It is important to have a leader who will set a vision, create an environment to hit those goals and lead a team to execute a plan. In Baltimore County, I would propose green power generation incentives, as well as reduced consumption incentives to local business. By using the dynamic economy of Baltimore County, we can spur job growth in these sectors, move toward clean energy, and work with our environmental partners to have a cleaner Baltimore County.

14. How would you help move Baltimore County to a 100% clean energy economy by 2035?

As stated above, we're going to set a goal for 2030 and create incentives for Baltimore County. These partnerships will be essential. We will also be incentivising community college attendance, which will train local residents for installation and maintenance of these complex systems.

15. What are some of your ideas for addressing the unique environmental challenges in Baltimore County and in Maryland?

First, I want to acknowledge that we need to set goals to get off the grid as soon as possible. That is why I am advocating for getting off the grid on the most aggressive schedule of any of my primary opponents. I think that the Urban Rural Demarcation Line is a great idea. It allows us to adjust neighborhood requirements to create appropriate development, preserve our open space, and is way ahead of its time.

We have 200 miles of shoreline, exceptional parks, and a large share of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. I grew up in Dundalk and on the water. We need strong action to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment entering to the Chesapeake Bay; prohibition of Styrofoam and plastic bags; and make green development a priority. We need to see stormwater remediation through, and be mindful of climate change and rising water as we grow.

We also need to improve recycling rates in Baltimore County; to enact a home composting program; and ramp up our efforts to eliminate trash and litter across our jurisdiction. As County Executive, I'll find

ways to put significantly more land in agricultural preservation, invest more in open space and find ways to make our communities walkable.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

16. Do you support raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour?

Yes

As a candidate for Baltimore County Executive, I'm calling for a statewide minimum wage of \$15/hour. I am the only candidate to have done so.

17. What is your position on unionization?

Collective bargaining is a fundamental, enabling right. Unions are the backbone of America's middle class. We need to strengthen and grow organized labor. That's why I'm proud to be endorsed by LiUNA, SEIU, UFCW, Plumbers & Steamfitters, UNITE HERE 7, and the Asbestos Workers -- with more endorsements expected soon.

18. (Rent Court Reform) The Baltimore Sun recently affirmed that "The rent court system routinely works against tenants, while in many cases failing to hold landlords accountable." A reform bill agreed to by many landlords and tenants passed last year in the Maryland House, but was blocked by the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. What specific actions will you take to ensure Rent Court reforms are enacted?

I will work with state legislators to get this bill passed. If necessary, we will enact this legislation locally.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

19. Will you support legislation for Small Donor Matched Public Financing of elections?

Yes

A public option is a core piece of my platform. Campaign finance reform is needed to return our Democracy to the people, not special interests. I am the only candidate for County Executive who has called for a small donor match public financing option for Baltimore County.

20. Will you make a pledge to run without corporate, or developer money in your campaign?

Unfortunately I cannot make this pledge. It is important to be competitive on money, messaging, and organization in this campaign. Without sufficient resources, we cannot win, and if we don't win, we won't be able to enact a public finance option for local campaigns.

I am proud of the large grassroots support we have had in this campaign, which has kept other funding sources to a relatively small portion of our overall resources. I will not be an executive who is beholden to any special interest. Publicly financed elections will be enacted under an Olszewski Administration.

21. Will you support the legislation by Wolf-PAC/GMOM (Get Money Out of Maryland) to call for an Article V convention to get money out of politics?

Yes

HOUSING

22. Where do you stand on the Home Act to prevent housing discrimination based on source of income?

I've been a strong supporter of this legislation since its introduction. It is long overdue. It is infuriating that we are still debating discrimination in Baltimore County in 2018. Discrimination in any form is wrong.

I am the only candidate for County Executive to support this legislation.

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC SECURITY

23. While there is undoubtedly a wide range of policies you might wish to propose that you have not discussed above, what would be one or two additional policies or programs in particular that you will put forward that you would especially want to highlight – policies which you believe will create economic opportunity, employment, address income inequality in Maryland, assist low and middle income people in Maryland, bring social services to needy communities or create greater economic security for seniors?

I briefly mentioned EARN and Community Schools in earlier answers, but I believe so strongly in their capacity to transform economic opportunity, create employment and address income inequality that I would like to discuss them in more detail below.

When I served in the House of Delegates, I was the lead sponsor of the EARN Act, a program that connects students to jobs that exist now. Essentially, the program tailors high school and community college job training programs to jobs that are available in the region. By growing a relationship between schools and the private sector we can make sure students are learning the skills they need to fill the jobs in the region, thereby creating an employment pipeline for students.

Community schools meet several important needs. A focus not just on academics, but health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement improves student learning, families and the communities in which students and their parents live. The communities of Baltimore County all have strengths that contribute to the success of our young people. They assemble and involve

parents, teachers, school-based staff, community residents, neighborhood organizations and other relevant stakeholders who are committed to the success of our kids.

Making community schools work require investment. In addition to hiring a coordinator, we should and I will find the resources necessary to offer healthcare services, youth development, enriched academic assistance, English classes, job training and more – both for our students **and their families**. Until and unless we create the environments in which students and their families can thrive, we will not be able to fully close the opportunity gaps which exist in Baltimore County.

Building on the successes of the pilot program currently underway at Lansdowne High School, together we will grow and replicate the Community School model within communities of need across Baltimore County.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

24. Do you feel that Baltimore County needs to improve in accountability and/or transparency? If so, what are some of your ideas for improving both?

Absolutely. It simply does not work for the residents of the county for the county government to hold meetings and work sessions when members of the public cannot attend them. I'll remedy this by pushing to have work sessions in the evening when people can actually attend, and by holding budget hearings in each region, so that we can better connect with constituents and inform them of the nuances in the county budget. We can also do more with social media and mobile apps to engage with residents.

We also have lagged behind other counties in transparency and accountability in giving contracts and bids to companies in the county government. I think that opening the government up to more commentary and insight from our citizens will result in a greater amount of accountability and transparency.

Please certify by signing below that the above or attached answers reflect your policy views.

Print your name: John A. Olszewski, Jr.



Signature: _____

Date: January 26, 2018