

## **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? **State Senate District 42. As you will find in my responses below, I have extensive experience in advocacy at the state level and directly for individuals. I have been an attorney in Baltimore for over ten years representing the disadvantaged (public defender, lead-poisoning, employee dispute). When at the OPD, I served on the Government Relations team where I testified in front of the legislature everyday on bill affecting my clients. I have since promoted legislation to remove lead paint from Baltimore. I have also worked at the Community College of Baltimore County to help students achieve their higher educational or vocational goals. I have served on the Baltimore County Board of Recreation and Parks since 2014 and the Baltimore County Democratic State Central Committee since 2014 (Chair 2015-2016). I am a husband and father who grew up in the district and spent almost my entire life here, very connected to the community.**

2. What will be the principles or values that guide your public service? **Empathy and compassion. We need to do better at lifting people up and providing support when they need it. A rising tide lifts all boats.**

### **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.)

- a. Yes -- **X**
- b. No

Explanation: **I assisted the progressive coalition in a local effort to defeat 287(g) in Baltimore County. I helped with strategic planning, media relations, and petition canvassing. When I was an Assistant Public Defender, I played a lead role in training fellow attorneys on how to best represent individuals who could face potential deportation. I was a guest on WYPR's Sheila Kast show to discuss in 2012.**

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)? **No.**

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? **Yes, I oppose that cooperation. See answer #3.**

6. What will you do to promote racial integration in Baltimore County? **This is a hard answer for a state legislator to answer, but I support the Home Act at the state level. Delegate Steve Lafferty has been**

**championing the Home Act for a long time and I would like to support him in his efforts. Ending source of income discrimination would allow low income families to move to opportunity which proves to benefit the children given that chance.**

### 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?

- a. Yes - **X**
- b. No

**Explanation: Baltimore City has already taken this step in its jurisdiction. It will not be a large cost to them because students at BCCC have largely federally subsidized tuition. I have been an adjunct faculty member at CCBC for a decade and I have seen, first-hand, the benefits of providing this level of education to our citizens. The student-debt crisis is real and we should take every opportunity to set graduates up for success and not a lifetime of paying back loans.**

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? **I would follow the recommendations of the Kirwan Commission which calls for more equitable funding to close the gap for schools in high poverty areas. I am also 100% against the BOOST program which provides vouchers for private schools. This creates a brain drain and financial drain from our public schools.**

9. What would you do to improve the state of Baltimore County public schools? **Another tough question for a state legislator because this falls more on the school board and county government. But I would advocate for more state funding for our schools. Responses to Question #8 would better our schools here in the county.**

### 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?

- a. Yes - **X**
- b. No

**Explanation: I agree with Ben Jealous' MD-Care proposal. With MD's All-Payer system, we are closer to single-payer than people know. One of the biggest obstacles is navigating the political terrain and making sure that it goes off without a hitch. Marylanders might not have forgotten the rocky start of the MD Health Exchange. I think that the money is there as forecast by Jealous, but we need to convince our constituency that we will all do better if we provide health insurance to the roughly 6% of Marylanders who are still without.**

### 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?

- a. Yes - **X**
- b. No

Explanation: **Between 2008 and 2012, when I was an Assistant Public Defender in Baltimore City, I would guess that I represented more clients at bail review hearings than any attorney in the United States. I have direct knowledge of our flawed/unconstitutional use of money bail. I agree with the Court of Appeals and I would like to see MD follow DC's practice of providing pre-trial monitoring in lieu of bail.**

12. What is your position on community policing? **In favor of it! Our communities in Baltimore County have a pretty good relationship with the police. This is obviously a different story in Baltimore City and there is a lot to do.**

### ENVIRONMENT

13. How would you help move Maryland to a 50% clean energy economy by 2030? **I am absolutely in favor of this legislation. The tricky part is that I also oppose labeling "black liquor" and "trash incineration" as renewable energy. I support an expansion of solar and wind in the state.**

14. How would you help move Baltimore County to a 100% clean energy economy by 2035? **Same answer as Question #13. I would work with Delegate Shane Robinson on his bill.**

15. What are some of your ideas for addressing the unique environmental challenges in Baltimore County and in Maryland? **In District 42, we have two large reservoirs that we need to protect and a vast amount of open space and agriculture to preserve. I would work with the north Baltimore County community who is fearful that agricultural land will be converted to solar farms. I would support smart growth policies that limit new development.**

### ECONOMIC JUSTICE

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

- a. Yes - **X**
- b. No

Explanation: **I was the only candidate in this race who attended the Fight for \$15 rally in Annapolis on MLK Day. This is the greatest public relations battle that we have been losing for years. A simple look at the rise in inflation and corporate profits over the past several decades at the same time that wages have remained flat should be enough to convince people that workers are being short-changed and can barely survive. We cannot allow our society to create a permanent underclass.**

17. What is your position on unionization? **I am a strong supporter for the right to unionize. I have pledged to support unionizing adjunct faculty members at community colleges.**

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? **Having represented tenants as an attorney for the past five years, this issue is very near and dear to me. The lead-poisoned children whom I represented had their lives permanently affected by the negligence of their landlords. The fact that our current Rent Court system reliably works against tenants represents a moral crisis. I would support reform if a member of JPR and will be a vocal advocate for tenants.**

### CAMPAIGN FINANCE

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

- a. Yes - **X**
- b. No

Explanation: **I recently testified before the Baltimore County Council calling for public financing of our local elections. If the voters in Howard County approved this at the ballot box, then I am sure that voters in Baltimore County would do the same. People are disgusted by how our campaigns are funded and feel that our representatives have lost sight of who their real constituents are.**

20. Will you make a pledge to run without corporate, or developer money in your campaign? **No. The Republican in the field self-funded his House of Delegates race with a loan of over \$80,000. He has already loaned himself \$200,000 for his senate race. Since we currently do not have public financing, I have to use every resource available. In my first report that was published on January 17, 2018, I have shown that my campaign is grassroots fueled with no corporate or developer contributions at this time. Our average contribution was just over \$100 from over 200 individual contributions.**

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? **See above! In favor.**

### 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?

**One other topic that wasn't cover is marijuana legalization and efforts to battle opioid addiction. I believe that marijuana should be legalized for recreational purposes. My reasoning isn't based on the tax revenue that Maryland would gain, but that definitely would help pay for more services that Marylanders need. I am not a fan of our current medical marijuana program that has moved at a snail's pace and provided an opportunity to only the already wealthy and well-connected to receive permits. We can do better.**

#### 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? **Yes. Public Financing of campaigns. There aren't many things that a state legislator can do here. As a senator, I will do my best at having town halls and regular opportunities for my constituents to provide feedback and concerns.**

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

Print your name: \_\_\_\_\_Robbie Leonard\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_*Robert J.*\_\_\_\_\_

*Leonard*\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_January 18, 2018\_\_\_\_\_