

# Our Revolution Baltimore City/County

## *Baltimore City Endorsement Questionnaire*

**Candidate Name: Tori Rose**

**Office and District Running For: City Council District 7**

1. What is your vision and plan for public safety and reform of the police and criminal justice system?

**Answer:** My vision for public safety and reform of the police and criminal justice system starts with my desire to create and restore healthy and thriving communities. My vision will be implemented under a plan I call R.I.S.E. (Restore. Invest. Support. Educate.) Under the RISE plan I would advocate to reduce our city and state's investment in jails and incarceration. To counter the effects of mass incarceration, I would work to increase our investment in jobs creation and fight to fund education for our children. Additionally, I will fight for funding and create programs for our youth and adults who want to further their education and obtain a High school diploma or GED. I will advocate for the creation of community schools for the under-served parts of my district, especially now since we are facing the closing of another elementary school. Community schools will help restore poor communities and allow for students and parents to find the additional restorative resources needed to live healthy and thriving lives.

Regarding criminal justice, we must stop charging children as adults and start treating children who interact with the justice system as children, especially in cases of nonviolent crimes. I would also advocate for the creation of vocational and trade programs that would offer jobs in solar paneling, construction, HVAC and more. This will also allow us to pipeline our youth into job programs and deter them from a life of panhandling.

We need to challenge the way the BPD polices our communities and reestablish the public's trust. We must stop the criminalization of poverty and reverse the criminalization of addiction. I want to see the end of private prisons and detention centers and the end of private owners profiting from locking people up. I would challenge the budget allocation for the BPD and reallocate funds to other governmental agencies, community groups, schools, and non-profit organization so

we can end our reliance on police forces to handle mental health emergencies, homelessness, maintenance violations, and other low-level situations.

2. What can you do, within the powers of the office you are running for, to improve education for all Baltimoreans and provide educational equity?

**Answer:** As an educator, I know firsthand the importance of educational equity and the need for having better funded schools. I also know the pressures of having one of the most important jobs, but not receiving an equitable pay. Within the City Council, I would work for teachers to receive higher pay, additional development, and resources that can help them better serve our children. I will continue to advocate for funding through the Kirwan Commission. I will fight for our schools to receive the monies needed to have social workers, nurses, and counselors full time in every school. I will fight for early childhood education to be a focus of the Baltimore School System, and work to install a head start program in every school and recreation center in my district. I will build stronger partnerships with the school board, community schools, and teachers unions. I will also encourage educators to apply an equity lens to all aspects of their work from engaging with students to working alongside the parents. We have to ensure Educational equity is a critical focus for Baltimore City's public schools. District 7 will be the catalyst for change and the benchmark for progress across our city.

3. How will you address blight and revitalize communities while avoiding gentrification?

**Answer:** My focus is creating and restoring healthy and thriving communities. In order to do this we cannot just fix up vacancies or build commercial apartment towers. We must overhaul neighborhoods through developing Community Land Trusts. We should empower communities to establish property owned by the community of which the owners reside. This allows residents and the surrounding neighborhood to cooperatively manage land and properly develop it.

As someone who was homeless as a teen, I personally know the outcomes of not having housing security. I want to ensure we enhance housing options for youth at risk of homelessness. It is our responsibility to create an effective development model that builds a new vision of community health and sustainability that benefits all residents, both young and old. I encourage community collaborations that brings different groups of people to the same table to identify a shared interest in order to empower our communities.

I will fight for grocery stores, pharmacies, libraries and parks for my community and I will operate with integrity when working with developers/investors. I firmly believe that a CBA outlining direct investment to the community should be mandated for any developer or investor to ensure the preservation and return on investment for the community in which development occurs.

4. How will you ensure that communities in the Black Butterfly receive equitable investment?

**Answer:** I will ensure communities in the Black Butterfly receive equitable investment by first addressing the nature of our city. Our city, especially my district, is segregated and redlining exists and is apparent in the policies and practices of the current council representative. Once elected, I will focus my attention to the city's capital improvement financing and demand flow into the poorest communities. Using the RISE plan, I will work with governmental agencies, think tanks, and community organizations to create a sustainability and revitalization agreement for our communities. The poorest communities need an allocation of at least 7% of the city's overall budget being committed each year for 20 years into the poorest communities, especially those that are more than 80% African American. I will work to ensure the budget allotted to Neighborhood Impact Investment Fund is increased annually to actually have an impact on underdeveloped communities.

I will continue to build collaborative relationships so that the community associations along with the community development organizations have the primary say in where money is spent in their specific neighborhoods since this is the neighborhood in which they live and pay taxes. We need to focus our money on community sustainability and not excessively funding the police department. We currently spend more on police than we do on health, housing, arts, parks, community development, workforce development, and civil rights and equity.

5. How would you improve transit, transportation, and the ability for people to get around in the city? Would you support the creation of a Regional Transit Authority to provide transit independence from the state?

**Answer:** In recent years, my community has suffered the devastating impact of the loss of the Red Line light rail project and the negative aftereffects to the social and economic well-being of our district. Yes, I will support the creation of a Regional Transit Authority to provide transit independence from the state and to see investments made in extending the existing transit systems. I would advocate to

modernize Intercity and Commuter Rail, to streamline Planning and Secure Funding for Projects That Remove Bottlenecks Limiting the Rail System's Speed, Frequency, Reliability, and Growth. I would work with transportation advocates and special interest groups to create a redevelopment plan to expand and modernize Union Station and redevelop Baltimore Penn Station, etc.

6. How will you address the environment, climate justice, and the climate crisis locally, including not only reducing/eliminating greenhouse gas emissions within the city, but also protecting the people and infrastructure from the consequences of the climate crisis? Will you declare a state of climate emergency?

**Answer:** The health and wellness of my district is my number one priority. The prevalence of asthma, and other diseases that are a result of poor stormwater infrastructure that impacts the 7th make green stormwater a necessity and therefore will be a priority and focus of mine as a Councilwoman. This priority will be addressed by working with DPW and ensuring there is an effective and transparent communication system in place between city residents and agencies. Also, while there are housing incentives for homeowners to build private GSIs on their property, there should also be community-based incentives that encourage all residents to be more involved in prioritizing our greening needs. Yes, I will declare a state of climate emergency, as I have been doing. I publicly have demanded environmental justice. I've called for the creation of an Environmental Accountability Committee which will allow for community oversight and community input regarding environmental decisions made involving policy, legislation, and funding.

7. How will you improve public health within the city? Please address racial and economic health disparities and social determinants of health. Some things to consider:
- a. The high asthma rate;
  - b. Food insecurity and food deserts;
  - c. Disparities in life expectancy;
  - d. The effects of trauma and violence.
  - e. Lead in water and housing.

**Answer:** Our health and economic disparities are directly related to the long-standing racism in our city. The racism and segregation in our city have been systemic and systematically planned for well over 100 years. The first thing we do is acknowledge it. We can no longer pacify one another and pretend that the conditions of our communities are not because of a long-standing desire to keep

African Americans in underfunded, underrepresented and poor communities. Going back to my answer in question 1, the RISE initiative allows for us to build a holistic and sustainable plan that creates jobs, provides health care for all, free child care, substance abuse treatment and prevention, housing for the homeless, and affordable housing for low to middle income individuals and families. I would also call for the incinerators in Baltimore to be closed and we begin to implement green/clean energy alternatives. I will fight for the protection of our children and work to enhance the quality of homes thus reducing the amount of families exposed to lead. I will work to incentivize lead abatement programs for property owners who want to provide safe housing for their tenants but may need financial assistance. I will work to bring healthy food options to the district by helping communities secure greenspaces for farming and growing fresh produce and I will advocate for better food markets in the district. I am a collaborator who knows how to build relationships and I will work diligently to build partnerships with Wegman's and Wholefoods to bring better food options to my district.

8. How will you improve economic opportunities for all residents of Baltimore? What programs would you create or reform to improve access to well-paying jobs?

**Answer:** Under the RISE initiative I would work with governmental agencies to identify job areas that have deficiencies and I would leverage my network of community partners to pipeline into these already existing programs. I also would continue to engage low skill citizens in opportunities to increase their skill set for career paths and ensure that low wage/low skill and unemployed citizens have opportunities to make a fair and livable wage. I would continue to push and advocate for adult learning, adult education and adult literacy programs like We Read. We Lead. the adult literacy program I founded in 2018.

I will also continue to stand with the fight for fifteen advocates and lobbyists demanding a higher minimum wage for all workers.

9. What reforms to the structure and functioning of city government would you implement?

**Answer:** I would stand behind and support the creation of an independent non-partisan Department of Legislative Services to aid City Council members and city officials in understanding the ramifications, effects, and potentially risks of specific proposed legislation, ballot initiatives and other reforms.

I also support establishing an independent Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to ensure our city contracting is conducted in fair and equitable way while being transparent and allowing for citizen oversight.

10. How will you improve the quality of life for city residents? Some things to consider:

- a. Community art;
- b. Community centers and recreation;
- c. Illegal dumping;
- d. Beautification of streets and neighborhoods;
- e. Improving infrastructure;
- f. Trash pickup and recycling.

**Answer:** The focus of my campaign has been to educate my neighbors of the services and liberties we deserve! We deserve to live in healthy, clean, and thriving communities with a City Government that works for us and allows us to put our trust in it. Everyday quality of life issues like clean streets and alleys, trash collections, and having access to community centers and recreation centers should be a given. I have been holding the city accountable for the preservation of our communities and I have been fighting to keep our communities clean. My plan is to hold DPW, the Mayor's office, the community associations, the community, and myself as Councilwoman accountable for keeping constant communication with one another and working to maintain clean and healthy communities. I will also advocate to have additional funds allocated for the Black arts district of Pennsylvania Ave.

11. How will you address the needs of immigrants, both documented and undocumented? Will you ensure the safety of our undocumented neighbors?

**Answer:** While I need to research more into the number of immigrants who are living in my district, I believe that everyone should be safe here in Baltimore. Our city has been built on the work and culture of immigrants and I see the value in allowing immigrants to establish a meaningful livelihood in our city.

12. How will you address the need for equitable and affordable housing?

**Answer:** I will address the need for equitable and affordable housing by proposing stronger tax incentives for affordable housing and community development in neglected and poor communities. I also will fight for better funding for housing initiatives and mandate that any new developed properties have an affordable housing option. I will continue to advocate for stronger resources and programs to expand homeownership. I also think Baltimore has an opportunity to look beyond our city and benchmark from the successes of other mayor cities across the country in the area of affordable housing.

13. How will you balance providing services, including water, to all citizens while planning and paying for infrastructure upgrades/repair and replacement?

**Answer:** I will work to ensure the city revamps its system of placing the financial burden on the citizens. Again, this is an opportunity for Baltimore to RISE and to look at the plans and policies that worked in other major cities. Too frequently we miss the opportunity to benchmark. It is time for Baltimore to operate differently. Our leadership has to be held accountable to ensure we are spending our budget appropriately on the right line items and at the right time. My plan to balance providing services while identifying how to pay for upgrades involves the City Council working with the budget, the oversight committee and the Mayor to ensure we are approaching spending, repairs, and budgeting equitably.

14. Is there anything else you'd like us to know?

**Answer:** I am a hardworking and dedicated person who had the luxury of being raised in the district in which I am seeking election. I am a product of Baltimore City's public schools and I know the values and work ethic the system instilled in me. I am fueled by my desire to RESTORE the community that I love, the community that raised me, and the community in which I am raising my son. District 7 is my home and I am committed to be the Councilwoman my district deserves! I am lover of people and I understand the importance of leading with the people as my focus. Every policy decision, every piece of legislation, and every law must be passed with the betterment of the community in mind. As an advocate and leader in my community, I have served the under-represented populations of the 7<sup>th</sup> for years, and fought to bring attention to the environmental, economic and social injustices and disparities that exist in my community. For years, I have been boots on the ground serving, teaching, collaborating, and working for my community. I am now excited to have the opportunity to represent District 7 legislatively in City Hall. I believe that people's voices should be heard at the decision-making table, and their opinions should be factored into our solutions for the communities we govern.

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