

Our Revolution Maryland

Congressional District 8 Questionnaire

Please return this questionnaire to hal@ourrevolutionmd.com by the end of the day on March 3rd. Please note that your responses will be posted publicly.

1. Why are you running for Congress? **We are confronting the most lawless, authoritarian and dangerous presidential administration of our lifetime, and I am a passionate defender of the Constitution and Bill of Rights, strong democracy, and the rule of law. Although I would prefer to be leading on climate change, gun safety, and promoting the power of working people, I have been a leader in the drive to impeach Donald Trump and to restore basic legality to our government. I work seven days a week to push for civil justice and progress for our people and I do everything in my power to provide the best constituent services possible for the good people of Frederick, Montgomery and Carroll Counties. We are in the middle of this struggle and my office is an important part of the resistance to rising authoritarianism, militarism, racism and anti-Semitism in America.**
2. Do you support H.R.1384 - Medicare for All Act of 2019? Please explain your answer. **YES, I am a cosponsor. I have strongly backed universal health care and single-payer insurance ever since I spent a year living in Europe after college and seeing how well national health care systems work to reduce sickness, address the health needs of the population, and keep down the costs of health care. Later, in 2010, when I was a Maryland state senator and law professor and I was diagnosed with Stage 3 colon cancer and did surgery, radiation and chemotherapy, my determination to make sure that all people are covered in America was solidified and enhanced. Our current health regime is indefensible in leaving tens of millions of people uncovered and tens of millions of people more consigned to fight with their insurance companies over basic care and coverage. The wealthiest nation on earth should catch up with all the others.**
3. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change we now have less than 11 years left to make sweeping social and structural changes to avert the worst of the climate crisis. How will you address this emergency? Be specific and address the following
 - a. Do you support a Green New Deal as outlined in H.Res.109? **YES, I am an early and original cosponsor and even called for a “Green Deal for America” in my first campaign for Congress in 2016. I have worked closely with AOC and Pramila Jayapal to forward the Medicare for All plan in Congress and spoke at length in its defense in the House Rules Committee in 2019 in our first hearing on it.**
 - b. Do you support holding fossil fuel companies accountable? **YES. This is a basic implication of tort liability and the rule of law and will be an important test of our power to hold industry accountable for a fundamental dangerous business model.**
 - c. How will you provide for a just transition for fossil fuel workers? **I support the Green New Deal, which guarantees five years of pay for fossil fuel workers and provides housing assistance, job training and placement, health care, and more for displaced**

workers. This must be an essential component of any environmental legislation we pass, and labor unions must be at the heart of our coalition.

- d. Please discuss the importance of climate justice for frontline and vulnerable communities. As we work to confront the crisis of climate change, we need to build a comprehensive and inclusive movement that gives every person an opportunity to speak and become part of the social solution. Low-income communities, communities of color, the elderly, children, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups often bear the brunt of pollution and experience the most devastating consequences of climate chaos. We need to work as a society to help these communities recover and prepare for the unpredictable dynamics of climate change. I support the Green New Deal's Climate Resiliency Fund, which will help these frontline communities as we transition to a truly green economy, providing jobs, more resilient infrastructure, and other important and urgently needed resources.**

- 4. What steps do you propose to reduce the power and influence of large corporations and wealthy people over every aspect of life in America?**

First and foremost, we need to get corporate treasury money out of our political campaigns and restore one person-one vote ethics to our political democracy. In the 2010 *Citizens United v. the FEC* court decision, five right-wing Supreme Court Justices overturned two centuries of jurisprudence, which understood corporations to be "artificial entities" entitled only to rights and attributes directly conferred upon them by legislatures, to declare that private corporations actually enjoy the political free speech rights of the people. As corporate treasuries have been converted into political slush funds, and hundreds of millions of dollars in dark money is spent by CEOs in the name of their unwitting shareholders, we now see what Court-proclaimed plutocracy looks like. It's time we remind America of what popular government looks like so that's why—on the first day of the 116th Congress—I introduced a bipartisan constitutional amendment with colleagues to get big money out of politics and restore democratic power to the people. Let's rebuild the wall of separation between massive private corporations and the people's public elections.

I am also concerned about the amount of power large corporations wield in our government and society. In the past few decades, we've seen rising corporate consolidation and massive monopolization in nearly every sector of our economy—from retailers to airlines, utility companies to internet providers, and pharmaceutical companies to tech firms. That is why I formed the Congressional Antitrust Caucus along with several of my colleagues. We are working on policies to limit massive mergers and corporate consolidation and promote a just economy that works for everyone as both producers and consumers.

- 5. What are the three biggest challenges facing your district and how do you realistically believe that we can address each one successfully?**
 - 1. We need to confront both the systematic neglect of American infrastructure and the growing wreckage of climate chaos by passing a Green New Deal, a massive infrastructure plan that uplifts our environmental priorities.**
 - 2. We need to address the epidemic of gun violence that threatens our peace and sense of peace in every community in my district and the country, and I am working to enact common sense gun safety laws, such as a universal background check for violent criminals and the criminally dangerous and a ban on military-style assault weapons. All of the experience I had fighting for the Maryland Firearm Safety Act in Annapolis in 2013 has been extremely useful to my leadership in this**

domain in Congress. **3. In the face of rank incompetence and chaos unleashed by the Trump administration (typified now by the president's dangerously lackadaisical and false musings about the Coronavirus), we must rebuild and fortify our federal government and repel the GOP's repeated attacks on the independence, professionalism and rights of the federal work force. As a Representative who serves more than 60,000 federal workers and their families, tens of thousands of retired federal workers, and perhaps even more people whose livelihood is intertwined with government, we need to restore respect and fairness for the federal work force, treating them as the agents of the people and the common good. Maryland's 8th District is home to dozens of government agencies and we rely on federal workers to care for our veterans, safeguard our public health, make scientific progress, protect the environment, move our economy, deliver our Social Security checks, and so much more. It's time to end the GOP's war on the federal work force.**

Civil servants and federal employees are the backbone of America's workforce, and as the nation's largest unionized employer, the federal government sets many key standards for labor-management relations. Since I entered Congress, one of my top priorities has been fighting to protect workers' right to organize and bargain collectively. This Administration has engaged in a coordinated effort to dismantle federal unions and undermine collective bargaining rights, proposing extreme changes to labor contracts under negotiation with each of the unions representing federal employees. As a member of the House Oversight and Reform Committee, I am defending federal employees and the critical work they do against baseless partisan attacks, constant threats of salary and benefit cuts, efforts to undermine their collective bargaining rights and scandalous political interference with their work. The underfunding of essential government agencies and efforts to decimate the federal workforce are undermining essential public missions.

6. How would you address racial justice? Be specific and address the following:
- a. Criminal justice reform, including justice for people currently or previously incarcerated as a result of the war on drugs – **In my career in Annapolis, I led the fight to abolish the death penalty, end mandatory minimum sentences in drug cases, and decriminalize marijuana possession, so I was proud in Congress to support the First Step Act, which was signed into law recently. Much more has to be done now to transform the prison-industrial complex. We need to end for-profit prisons, terminate the authoritarianism of the War on Drugs, restore voting rights for all former prisoners, decriminalize and destigmatize addiction, and abolish the death penalty nationally.**
 - b. The racial wealth gap – **Economic inequality in this country is at an all-time high, and people of color face a double form of injustice and exclusion. We need to end the racial wealth gap by increasing wages, ending corporate tax cuts and tax breaks for the wealthiest 1%, investing federal funds in programs that support and empower marginalized communities, and ending discriminatory practices that criminalize and punish poverty.**
 - c. Systemic inequities such as education, healthcare or housing – **The racial wealth gap persists in large part due to the systemic inequality that is baked into our education, health care, financial, and housing systems. Racist housing policies and discriminatory financial lending practices have made it difficult for African Americans to build wealth through homeownership. The same is true of access to higher education, which again makes it difficult to secure better work and achieve financial stability. Lack of access to high-quality, affordable health care often leads to**

worse health outcomes and higher mortality rates in African-American communities. We need to confront the systemic and persistent nature of these problems and end them once and for all.

- d. Voter suppression - As a constitutional law professor for more than 25 years, I am a longtime advocate for fair elections and strong voting rights. As a Maryland State Senator, I worked to restore the voting rights of former prisoners, lower the state voter registration age to 16, and steer the nation's first National Popular Vote law to passage. I am continuing this work in Congress as a proud member of the Congressional Voting Rights Caucus; a member of the House Judiciary Committee; and as Vice-Chair of the Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice. I have cosponsored legislation to increase voter participation in elections by allowing citizens to vote early or by mail, establishing automatic voter registration, requiring employers to offer workers two hours of paid leave to vote, combatting voter suppression efforts, and safeguarding our elections. I've also helped pass legislation that would expand voting rights under the Voting Rights Act, and am working to ensure that every Americans' right to vote is secure. As Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, I am overseeing investigations into voter suppression tactics by numerous state governments. As we continue with these investigations, we must also advance innovative reforms to realize the true promise of our democracy, including new voting procedures such as ranked choice voting and a national compact to ensure the popular vote prevails in presidential elections. I am the lead sponsor of Ranked Choice Voting in Congress.
7. What are some policies you would support to improve gender equity, including for trans and non-binary people? As the Representative of a District that is home to a diverse and robust LGBTQ+ community, I am a proud cosponsor and vocal supporter of H.R. 5, which will guarantee that LGBTQ+ Americans cannot be discriminated against because of who they are or whom they love. As a Vice Chair of the Congressional Equality Caucus, I'm also working to ensure that transgender Americans can live free of violence, fear, or prejudice. I oppose the Trump Administration's appalling and irrational ban on transgender servicemembers, which would roll back decades of civil and equal rights progress. There is no room for discrimination against patriots who are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to protect America. I'll keep fighting to make sure that transgender Americans receive the equal respect, honor, and gratitude they deserve.

As a member of the Congressional Equality Caucus, I was a proud cosponsor and enthusiastic proponent of H.R. 5, the Equality Act, which would amend the Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of the sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition of an individual, as well as because of sex-based stereotypes.

8. What is the most progressive legislation that you have sponsored or worked actively for, either as an elected official or as an activist? The list is long. Over the course of my career as a State Senator and Representative, I have led the fight or helped lead the fight for marriage equality and civil rights protection for transgender Marylanders; led the fight to abolish the death penalty in Maryland and restore voting rights to former prisoners; worked to pass in Maryland the toughest gun safety law in America, banning the sale of military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, and imposing a fingerprint-

based background check; presided over the Maryland Higher Education Labor Relations Board and wrote the rules that allowed more than 15,000 Marylanders join unions on the state's college and university campuses; helped lead the fight to invoke the War Powers Act and the Constitution to deny President Trump the power to go to war against Iran or to accelerate his fateful entanglement with the Saudi War in Yemen; fought for sweeping prescription drug reform to lower prices and co-sponsored Medicare for All; cosponsored legislation to strengthen the right to organize and participate in collective bargaining; and introduced the first Articles of Impeachment against Donald Trump for Abuse of Power and Obstruction of Congress in the House Rules Committee on behalf of the House Judiciary Committee.

9. What legislation will you support or introduce to prevent and treat opioid abuse, as well as punish irresponsible pharmaceutical purveyors of opioid and other addictive painkillers?
I cosponsored and voted for Rep. Cummings' CARE Act, which provides \$100 billion in funding to treat addiction and harm reduction programs. I also believe that major pharmaceutical companies must be held accountable for their role in this deadly epidemic. I have cosponsored numerous other pieces of legislation to address the opioid epidemic.

10. What legislation or other policy changes do you support in order to make college and graduate school affordable for poor, working-class, and middle-class Americans and to alleviate the crushing loan debt that many students and alumni are facing?
I believe that we urgently need to make higher education much more affordable for our population and champion a variety of legislative proposals to do so. I am a cosponsor of H.R. 1571, the Debt-Free College Act, which would leverage state-federal partnerships to make debt-free public college a reality over the next five years. I have also cosponsored H.R. 4674, the College Affordability Act, which tackles the rising cost of tuition and increases federal student aid.

I support efforts to provide relief to the millions of Americans struggling with student loan debt, including H.R. 2186, the Student Loan Refinancing Act, which would allow borrowers to refinance their loans any time a lower interest rate is available; H.R. 770, the Discharge Student Loans in Bankruptcy Act; H.R. 2648, the Student Borrower Bankruptcy Relief Act; H.R. 1070, the Student Loan Interest Tax Deduction Expansion Act; and more.

Additionally, as the elected Representative of thousands of dedicated public servants, I have worked hard to defend and strengthen the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program. I'm a proud cosponsor of H.R. 2441, the What You Can Do for Your Country Act of 2019, which would expand the types of federal loans that qualify for PSLF and would simplify the application process.

11. What is your position on guaranteeing the right to unionize for all workers, starting with important "card check" legislation? **I strongly support this legislation and am firmly committed to protecting the right to organize and engage in collective bargaining. I have offered numerous ideas to strengthen the power of workers to organize, including ending captive audience addresses by employers in the middle of organizing campaigns and giving union and worker creditors priority in corporate bankruptcy proceedings.**

12. Will you continue the push to pass \$15-an-hour minimum wage? **YES. I am a strong champion and have spoken out and voted for the \$15 minimum wage.**
13. Identify changes to our foreign policy that you would support in Congress. Include your thoughts on (A) America's recent and continuing military actions in the Middle East, (B) the number and size of American military bases in foreign countries, (C) international trade deals, (D) providing humanitarian and development aid versus nation-building.

Our foreign policy should seek strong democracy, social justice, peace and active diplomacy. Human rights must be the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy. As a nation, we must reassert our role as a leading voice for robust human rights protection worldwide. When these rights are threatened, we must hold to account the countries, groups, and people responsible – including our closest allies – and work to end human rights abuses whenever and wherever they occur. At the same time, we must also turn this lens inward, hold ourselves accountable, and take corrective action when we fail to protect the human rights of our own population.

As an Executive Committee Member of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, I advocate for the release, reduced sentencing, and improved treatment of prisoners of conscience through the Defending Freedoms Project. I previously advocated on behalf of Abdul Shakoor, who was released in 2019 after spending more than three years in prison in Pakistan for his belief in the Ahmadiyya Muslim faith. Currently, I advocate for the release of Kunchok Tsephel, a Tibetan writer and editor who founded the first Tibetan literary website. He has been imprisoned in China since 2009.

I reject militarism as the basis of our foreign policy and am convinced that the great breakthroughs of the last half-century have been the product of nonviolent movements, like the Civil Rights Movement, the movement to end apartheid in South Africa, the movement to end bureaucratic state socialism in the USSR and liberate Eastern Europe and the social change movements around the world. Meantime, the wars—like Iraq and Afghanistan—have been a brutal and costly failure. We should invest in real humanitarian and development aid to democratic governments and insist upon human rights as a complement.

I believe in free trade that is fair trade. We should encourage trade with nations around the world premised on a floor of human rights, environmental and labor regulation which lifts up people all over the world.

14. Over 11 million undocumented people live in the United States; many live in daily fear of deportation, of being separated from family members who are US citizens. Meanwhile, Immigrants pay billions of dollars in taxes, yet many are unable to access the public services that they help fund. What will you do to end the impasse on immigration reform? Specifically:
- What ideas do you have for facilitating legal status and ways to approach citizenship for undocumented persons already living in the US?
 - What policies would you put in place to support migrant workers and the US businesses who need seasonal workers?
 - Do you think ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) should be dismantled? Why or why not?

Maryland is the Free State, welcoming, inclusive and just, and I'm proud to represent the wonderfully diverse 8th District, which is home to many vibrant immigrant communities. I value the history, culture, and achievements of immigrants who now call America home and who live, work, and serve alongside us. I'm honored to serve in the most diverse House of Representatives ever, where every day I am pushing for comprehensive immigration reform, restoring protections for refugees and asylum seekers that have been cancelled by the Trump administration, and humane and pragmatic policies at the border.

Since entering Congress, I have worked to advance H.R. 6, the Dream and Promise Act, which would provide a pathway to citizenship for DREAMers – immigrants brought to the United States as children – and to families who have lived here for years due to natural disasters or conflicts in their native countries.

I oppose the Administration's baseless and misguided attacks on immigrants and refugees and believe people all across the nation must recall our founding as a nation of immigrants. As Thomas Paine wrote in Common Sense, America was conceived as a haven of refuge for people fleeing from religious and political repression and violence all over the world. I support legislation to preserve America's proud history as a haven for refugees and asylum seekers and to continue a robust legal immigration program.

I believe we must invest in and maintain modern and effective border security but am outraged by the senseless and inhumane treatment of refugees at our nation's door – particularly the cruel and unnecessary separation of children from their parents and an extreme overreliance on detention. I'm a proud cosponsor of H.R. 541, the Keep Families Together Act; H.R. 3799, the Reuniting Families Act; H.R. 2415, the Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act; and H.R. 3563, the Stop Shackling and Detaining Pregnant Women Act. I have traveled to the border to reemphasize these leading America values.

As Chair of the Oversight Committee's Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Subcommittee, I am conducting inquiries into the mistreatment of migrants at the border and in detention generally. I am determined to restore America's place as a haven of refuge for people fleeing from rights violations and misery in foreign lands. The administration has been reducing the flow of legal immigrants and asylum-seekers, leaving us with huge labor shortages and placing our nation on the side of tyrants and bullies even as we close the door to people fleeing the ravages of authoritarian rule.

- 15. Will you cosponsor and support H.J.Res.48, to propose a constitutional amendment providing that the rights protected by the Constitution are the rights of natural persons only, and require federal, state, and local government to regulate, limit, or prohibit election contributions and expenditures? YES, I am a proud cosponsor of legislation that will restore our elections to the people and end the deliberate and dangerous conflation of natural persons, who are the subject of constitutional rights, with corporate entities which are the creatures of law.**