



Our Revolution Maryland

Congressional District 7 Questionnaire

Please return this questionnaire to hal@ourrevolutionmd.com by the end of the day on December 5. Please note that your responses will be posted publicly.

1. Why are you running for Congress?

People from all over the state have asked me why I am running and to them my answer is simple, just like Lamar Jackson, I like running! In fact, I run each morning around the Inner Harbor and throughout the towns in this district. Daily runs keep me healthy and allow me to observe our district. I have seen the homeless population rise, the number of successful small businesses decline, and the high crime rate remain steady. I run down main street in Ellicott City and see a town that still needs help rebuilding. I run down Divided Sky Lane in Columbia, MD and see fantastic entertainment and restaurants that need to be connected to the city via public transportation and I run through the beautiful horse country in Monkton, MD seeing hardworking Marylanders who do their part and pay their taxes but are not receiving a fair share from their government.

As your Congressman, I intend to fight sky rocketing interest rates on both credit cards and student loans, while providing debt forgiveness for those willing to serve the district where help is needed. I am constantly reminded about the commitment this country has made to our troops, and as I nod my head in thanks because I am the son of one the original Tuskegee Airman, I cannot help but think that if we can treat our troops this well, why aren't we able to do the same for our teachers, nurses and police officers? I believe we can, and that support starts with ensuring young men and women that we will take care of their student loans in exchange for their commitment to serve.

Finally, I believe that our current President is the most dangerous person to ever hold the office. His actions are reprehensible and they are placing this country's democracy at risk. The fight for impeachment must be expanded and brought to the people.

2. Do you support H.R.1384 - Medicare for All Act of 2019? Please explain your answer.

I would absolutely support Medicare for All, HR 1384, as well as efforts to improve Obama care. I do think Pro Publica has raised several important points in a recent story seen here: <https://www.propublica.org/article/medicare-for-all-is-not-medicare-and-not-really-for-all-so-what-does-it-actually-mean>.

I will not stop fighting to improve healthcare and believe that if that means we have to look at a smaller piece of the pie in order to make progress, I am willing to do just that. I have suggested that we could reach an agreement with the Congressional Republicans on Mental Health reform. As

Friends of F. Michael Higginbotham
1734 Maryland Avenue, Suite 134, Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: (410)-429-0749
www.higginbothamforcongress.com

Congressman, I would support a bill to make all mental health costs tax deductible and to provide funding to ensure that all Americans have access to free or affordable mental health treatment and medications.

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?

I 100% support the Green New Deal. Our country and planet are in a state of emergency.

b. Do you support holding fossil fuel companies accountable?

I do support holding fossil fuel companies accountable for the damage they have caused to our environment, both in the halls of Congress and in the courts. If elected, I will work to reduce the barriers to civil lawsuits against wealthy corporations. Additionally, I would support legislation that (1) drives progress towards harnessing energy from infinite sources such as the sun, tidal forces, and wind; (2) requires that states receive energy from 100% renewable sources, especially government entities; (3) requires manufactures of energy consuming devices to become more efficient in every capacity, from coffee machines to cars; (4) funds programs such as the Natural Gas STAR Program; (5) caps carbon and methane emissions and (5) most simply believe we need to enforce stricter penalties for population and more funding for tree planting.

c. How will you provide for a just transition for fossil fuel workers?

I agree with Bernie Sanders in his message that a just transition for fossil fuel workers can be completed by providing them with paid time for education and training on clean energy.

d. Please discuss the importance of climate justice for frontline and vulnerable communities.

I would suggest that the reporting done by the Capitol News Service in their Code Red Investigation, which I have linked here, shows exactly why this issue must be on the frontline in this community and nationwide. <https://cnsmaryland.org/2019/11/11/has-climate-news-coverage-turned-a-corner/>. I am particularly influenced by the “need for trees” study that was highlighted in this investigation, showing the correlation between the hotter sections of Baltimore and poverty. <https://cnsmaryland.org/interactives/summer-2019/code-red/role-of-trees.html>.

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?

I believe that there are three things that must occur to stop this trend. Firstly, we should tax campaign donations and lobbying expenditures. Secondly, we must require civil courts to embrace the technologies that exist in this day and age that can enable the poor and middle class to bring a lawsuit without needing thousands of dollars and other financial resources. I do believe strongly in the civil justice system of America IF it can be accessed by all. Lastly, we need to understand that in many ways, capitalism can be more effective than democracy these

days, and if we organize against companies on social media that are destroying this country they will be forced to change. I would lead that charge as Congressman.

5. What are the three biggest challenges facing your district and how do you realistically believe that we can address each one successfully?

Great Question. I believe they are (1) High Crime Rates (2) Lack of Public Transportation and (3) Lack of Equity. I think in order to best fight crime we have to establish trust between the police, prosecutors and government officials and the people of this great nation. The President is making the building of that trust extremely difficult, which is why the fight to impeach him must intensify. We must let the people know that government officials are not above the law. Trust will allow for better police community relations and create opportunities for those who have committed low-level crimes to share information with the police for an opportunity to have their charges dropped. Illegal guns are coming into this city from our neighbors to the west and the distributors must be caught.

Regarding issues of public transportation, we have a solid plan that has been proposed for a Baltimore Red Line that simply needs to be pushed through.

When it comes to equity, there are several ways we can address the issue, including support for the Green New Deal, capping interest rates on student loans and credit cards, reducing taxes for small businesses and providing affordable health care for those who do not have access currently.

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

I firmly believe the reason the United States leads the world in prison population has less to do with harsh sentencing and more to do with the barriers to reentry for convicted persons. For this reason, significantly more funding is needed to expand reentry programs like our own: Baltimore Ex-Offender Reentry Program (BERE). We need to provide more meaningful opportunities to seal and expunge records and eliminate ALL licensing restrictions dealing with criminal records.

b. The racial wealth gap

We must make education more affordable and cap interest rates on loans and credit cards. I agree with the American Jobs Act with its elements that work to extend unemployment benefits and help individuals on their path back to work.

c. Systemic inequities such as education, healthcare or housing

When it comes to education, my priority is to eliminate student loans and debt for graduates who have met progressive requirements. I support a public option for healthcare such as Medicare For All and any other amendments to Obamacare that reduce the cost of health care in this country for the poor and middle class. I believe that access to affordable home loans needs to be further regulated. I support plans to offer no down payment home loans to first-time home buyers.

d. Voter suppression

I support the recommendations and work of the ACLU on voter suppression as stated in the following piece: <https://www.aclue.org/issues/voting-rights/fighting-voter-suppression>.

7. What are some policies you would support to improve gender equity, including for trans and non-binary people?

I support the Equality Act along with the Every Child Deserves a Family Act and other bills that propose the prohibition of discrimination that exists against LGBTQ+ people. Ensuring that LGBTQ+ people have comprehensive health insurance, without discrimination from providers, can further improve gender equity. I will advance policies to ensure students can attend school without fear of bullying.

8. What is the most progressive legislation that you have sponsored or worked actively for, either as an elected official or as an activist?

As an activist and educator, I have worked extensively on a right to vote for those incarcerated.

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?

First and foremost, we must address the underlining mental health issues associated with addiction. I said this when the crack epidemic existed in Baltimore, and say it again now as we have an opioid epidemic. We must provide free or affordable access to psychotherapy and medications that address addiction.

I would support the creation of a fund regarding opioids, similar to the fund that exists for vaccines. The fund would charge a tax on all opioids, as well as require pharmaceutical companies to provide funding. It would, in exchange, provide immunity from lawsuit to the pharmaceutical companies, but would allow victims of over-prescribing to bring a civil case without incurring hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal bills. For more on our nation's current vaccine compensation program, read here: <https://www.hrsa.gov/vaccine-compensation/about/index.html>

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?

In addition to a complete support for the plans offered by Bernie Sanders, I would support legislation that would make Medical and Nursing School free. Additionally, I would support legislation to have student loans discharged after 20 years of minimum payments and I would strongly advocate for caps on interest rates.

11. What is your position on guaranteeing the right to unionize for all workers, starting with important "card check" legislation?

I support the Sanders proposal to institute a "card check" option to make formation of unions easier and I would support a roll back of the right-to-work provisions of the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act.

However, I would strongly advise our current Union leadership to embrace many of the changes the technological revolution is allowing for, in order to ensure that Unions will not just provide protection for workers but also providing services efficiently and affordably.

12. Will you continue the push to pass \$15-an-hour minimum wage?

No question about it. It costs more to commute to work in Washington, DC and Baltimore than our current minimum wage provides for.

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.

On this particular issue, I am willing to fight the establishment in my party to reduce our military presence in the Middle East and reduce the aid we provide to Israel. 1% of the military spending in the Middle East could make college affordable for everyone in this country. International trade deals must involve sound environmental regulations and considerations. This country has no business engaging in nation building when our nation itself is crumbling. I would support humanitarian aid and development aid where necessary.

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:

a. What ideas do you have for facilitating legal status and ways to approach citizenship for undocumented persons already living in the US?

I support the Sanders position to reinstate and expand DACA and develop a humane policy for those who are seeking asylum in the United States. I fully support a dismantling of ICE and CBP as the work they do already overlaps with work that other agencies were formed to do and there is no reason why the work cannot be redistributed to other authorities. We must have a system that is clear, fair and responsible.

b. What policies would you put in place to support migrant workers and the US businesses who need seasonal workers?

I support the Campaign for Migrant Workers Justice and the policies they have endorsed.

c. Do you think ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) should be dismantled? Why or why not?

I 100% support dismantling. It is quite simply a complete waste of tax payers' dollars as the DOJ and other agencies are capable of protecting against illegal immigration. The creation of ICE, similar to the creation of Homeland Security, was an unnecessary and inefficient response to a perceived problem. It has created distrust and fear amongst all immigrants and serves no governmental purpose that cannot be covered by other existing agencies.

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?

I, of course, will support H.J.Res.48, although as the current court stands, I do not believe it will withstand constitutional scrutiny. I do believe a tax on campaign donations would not be struck down by Citizens United.