

Our Revolution Baltimore City/County

Baltimore City Endorsement Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Joseph A. Kane, II

Office and District Running For: Baltimore City Council, District 14

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

While no silver bullet exists that eradicates all crime, our campaign has identified a few policy prescriptions that go beyond punitive punishment alone to disincentivize criminal behavior and improve overall public safety. A comprehensive public safety strategy must: (1) treat crime and violence like the public health crisis it is (2) incorporate economic justice into its framework (3) properly invest in people by fully funding education, reentry support, and job and career readiness and training (4) and place the community at the center of the overall strategy.

From here, these four components provide the lens through which we can begin to confront the challenges that have plagued our city. Ensuring that whatever policies are proposed and implemented are in direct alignment with the core values of our vision.

The aforementioned goals can never be achieved if we don't have comprehensive police reform in Baltimore City. While there are officers who report to work everyday, with the goal of serving and protecting our city, we have been plagued with having the most corrupt department in the country. Until Baltimore City gets full control of the Baltimore City Police department our only recourse is to continue to advocate for local control, give more teeth to the Civilian Review Board, and work to ensure the consent decree is fully implemented.

As the safety chair for my civic association, I've created a partnership with OSI Baltimore and our community to begin the process of creating a community centered public safety strategy with the goal of defining the community policing strategy. Our campaign is centered around putting people back at the center of decision making. As more people become engaged in the political process

beyond the ballot box, the more power we as council members will have to influence decision making at the executive level.

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?

The Baltimore City Council has no control over Baltimore City Public Schools, per the Baltimore City Charter. City schools are governed by the Baltimore City School Board of Commissioners who are appointed by the mayor of Baltimore. However, this does not relieve us of our duty to ensure the students in our city have access to high quality education and the ability to learn and play in schools that are state of the art and safe.

As a graduate of Baltimore City Public Schools, a father of four children in City Schools, and a current board member of the Parent and Community Advisory Board for Baltimore City Public Schools I know the pressure points within the system we can use to impact outcomes in our schools. Our schools are charged with educating our city's most valuable resource, our children, and we must do everything within our power to ensure they have all the tools they need to be successful. Furthermore, we must be equally creative in addressing issues we have no power to change. As a councilmember I will organize our communities around these pressure points and will introduce legislation to ensure Baltimore City is contributing at least 25% of our annual budget to Baltimore City Public Schools.

These pressure points include:

- Promoting full community participation and partnership in the overall health of their neighborhood schools, is a vital component in the success of that community. Where there is an underperforming school, chances are the surrounding community is still reeling from the effects of decades of economic divestment and general neglect. In an effort to confront this past and ensure equity and accountability within all schools, Baltimore City Public Schools require the creation and maintenance of a School Family Council (SFC). The presence of the SFC in each public school, gives parents, teachers, principals, and other stakeholders an avenue to directly collaborate in influencing and enriching the learning environment.
- In conjunction with nurturing a robust SFC in each school, the formation and input of parent lead organizations should be at the forefront of our cities education policy. This constituency when activated has the potential to channel

its collective energy into pushing Baltimore City School Board and its local school in the right direction. For this group, the cost of broken policies- whether freezing classes or their children being deprived of resources and opportunities- is way too high. Complacency is never an option especially when our kids are involved.

- If you were asked to name three places that could be considered the heart of your community chances are that the name of your neighborhood school would come up. It's no coincidence this happens. Schools generally harbor a wealth of memories, experiences and lessons, which for better or worse shape us in our most formative years. Acknowledging the centrality that schools play in most communities, the Maryland State Legislature sought to cement this relationship even further by expanding the services offered to the community, through the model of "Community Schools".
- Schools designated as "Community Schools" indicate that a set of partnerships have been established to focus on the integration of academics, health and social services, youth and community development to strengthen learning, and promote healthier communities. By law schools are required to employ a full-time nurse as well as Community Coordinator to support the needs of the community. Opening up schools to their respective communities, allows once overlooked populations to access much needed services, in turn, allowing schools to become a defacto community center.
- Another critical lever allowing parents, educators and those interested in education policy direct access to the inner workings of the Baltimore City School Board of Commissioners (BCSBC) is the Parent and Community Advisory Board. Held every third Thursday of the month, this meeting gives stakeholders a space to collaborate and fine tune policies, geared towards our childrens' success.

Finally, as the Kirwan Commission continues their work to adjust the funding formula for State Schools, I will continue my advocacy in Annapolis for equity in funding, universal Pre-K, Community Schools, and more. After decades of underfunding and neglect it's time we had a member on the Baltimore City Council who will work tirelessly to ensure our school system is working for all of the children in Baltimore City.

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

Redeveloping communities that have been historically ignored has to be a priority of the Baltimore City Council. It's unconscionable that we have entire city blocks that are filled with vacant and abandoned properties.

As a member of the Baltimore City Council I would develop legislation to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We have to begin by acknowledging the historical harm that has been caused by racist housing policy in Baltimore City. Once we fully understand the impact of redlining, blockbusting, and intentional disinvestment by city leadership we can begin to holistically address the harm and trauma that has been caused. This will allow us to create policies that are intentional about ensuring we responsibly revitalize communities and avoid gentrification.

Finally, we have to pass good legislation that ensures communities are at the center of decision making as we address blight and revitalize their communities. This further increases accountability and transparency.

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

Baltimore City will never reach its full potential until every neighborhood receives fair and equitable investment that focuses on highlighting the character of each community. Quality schools, thriving mainstreets, reliable transit options, and quality affordable housing should not be a luxury afforded to a few in our city.

As a member of the Baltimore City Council I would ensure that communities in the Black Butterfly are getting these investments by using my role to provide oversight into agencies and entities that have been created to meet these goals. For example, the mission of the Baltimore Development Corporation is “to retain and expand existing businesses, support cultural resources, and attract new opportunities that spur economic growth and help create jobs”. This goal can not be fully achieved until community voice is represented within the Board of Directors. I would advocate for the creation of a community advisory board that has a mandate to ensure equity is rooted in the decision-making process.

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?

As a child growing up in Baltimore to a single mother of four boys, we couldn't afford a car and relied on public transportation. Today, my children rely on public transportation to get to and from school. I've experienced and know, firsthand, the gaps in service we face in the region when it comes to public transit. As a councilmember, I would not only support increased investment in transit but I would tap into the transit systems of our anchor institutions. These institutions are already providing reliable transit along some of the same routes as the Circulator and Link. It's time we partner with these institutions to create a more robust and reliable system that works for all. This is already happening at universities across the country.

I fully support a Regional Transit Authority that is independent from the state. Increasing access to jobs, housing, and education has to be at the center of how we rethink transportation in Baltimore. Working with our counterparts in surrounding counties benefits everyone. This regional approach would not relieve the state of providing a high quality system but it will fill the gaps in service that many in the region experience daily.

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?

The climate emergency that we face has to be treated like the emergency it is and as a member of the Baltimore City Council I would declare a state of climate emergency. To fight against this crisis we have to take proactive measures to protect our environment. These measures include but are not limited to investing in reliable transit systems so we can reduce the number of cars being used, promote and attract environmentally-oriented economic development, become a zero waste city, encourage DPW to prioritize repairs aimed at preventing backups into people's homes, and take action to create a more affordable housing stock free of lead paint.

During the development of the inner harbor, brownfield contaminants were dumped into disinvested communities that continue to suffer the health effects of the toxins from the brownfield sites. With new development projects, we must enforce high standards of environmental remediation across the city. Projects must demonstrate submit their plans to ensure the environment of the surrounding community will not experience negative effects from the development. In the event of demolition, construction must use best practices to prevent the transmission of lead and other particulate materials.

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.**

Adequately addressing the public health of our city has the potential to transform entire communities. This approach has to be an initiative implemented by the Health Department of Baltimore City while working with institutions like Johns Hopkins University, The University of Maryland, Morgan

State University, and others. This collaboration of anchor institutions and government can adequately identify the needs of our city while working to implement interventions designed to improve the overall health. As a member of the Baltimore City Council I would take the lead in ensuring that this collaboration is conducted in a meaningful way.

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?

Baltimore does not have a shortage of programs but rather a systemic breakdown in effective communication. As a member of the Baltimore City Council I would collaborate with entities like the Mayor's office of employment development to ensure that their services are accessible throughout our district. Additionally, we have to create programs that acknowledge the gaps in education many of our neighbors face due to decades of education underfunding. These services need to be intentional about meeting the unique needs of each person.

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

Baltimore has experienced corruption at a level that has left many feeling distrust in city government. I support the various charter amendments currently working through City Council including creation of the Board of Ethics, reducing the number of votes to two-thirds to overturn a mayoral veto, eliminate mayor's ability to veto line items in the budget, and removing mayoral appointment to the Board of Estimates.

I am currently advocating for a charter amendment that would ensure 25% is the minimum and a funding formula is included in the charter to ensure our schools are being adequately funded. This will be paid for by renegotiating PILOTS and shifting money from the Baltimore City Police Department.

Baltimore's current "strong mayor" government limits the power of the Baltimore City Council to the ability to cut funds from the budget. Until we have substantive charter reform our strategy is rooted in the ability to effectively organize our community back into the political process by centering the issues that are most important to our neighbors. This is what I do now and will expand once I am a member of the council.

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.**

The focus of this campaign is to bring people back to the center of our politics. I will use my background and skills as a community organizer to ensure all our communities have opportunities to improve their neighborhood's quality of life. I would like to work with our community schools to bring opportunities into the school for the entire community, including recreational opportunities outside of the typical school day. We have some of the most talented neighbors in District 14 and we can provide them more space to showcase their art.

Currently, neighborhoods only receive four community pitch-in dumpster days a year, regardless of the size of the community. I'll work with DPW and colleagues in Council and the Mayor's office to increase the opportunity for community-led clean up days. I will track 311 requests in our District and proactively reach out to the responsible departments to ensure timely responses to requests for illegal dumping and other constituent concerns.

Working with neighborhood groups and the variety of funding organizations, we will ensure beautification projects are taking off in all neighborhoods. I want to ensure neighborhood leaders are sharing important resources and information with their neighbors. We will support neighborhoods in establishing a block captain programs to ensure all neighbors receive relevant information, regardless of technological capabilities. We will also continue to conduct regular neighborhood canvasses, just as we have done for the past fifteen months to connect with and hear resident concerns.

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

Immigrant communities throughout Baltimore bring a richness of culture and pride to our city. I plan to work directing with the various organizations in Baltimore who support our immigrant neighbors such as CASA de Maryland, Centro Sol, Esperanza Center and others. District 14 is home to the Caribbean Festival, a display of Caribbean pride which brings participants to Baltimore from the Mid-Atlantic Region. We will work with the planners to ensure this event continues to be a success for years to come.

I will also look forward to working with our community's growing immigrant neighbors to ensure they are safe and welcome in their community and our city. I support Policy 1021 that prohibits police officers from asking immigrant status and ensures our police department is not working with ICE on administrative warrants or removal. Immigrants are our neighbors, business owners, kids classmates and we must ensure they are welcome in all parts of

Baltimore. We must foster positive relationships for all members of our community.

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

I support rent stabilization to ensure residents can continue to afford to live in the communities they call home. In addition to rent stabilization I would advocate to expand Community Land Trust in Baltimore, ensuring communities that are at-risk of gentrification have the ability to maintain affordability and community ownership of their homes. The cost of living continues to increase while we have seen little to no change in increased liveable wages. Rent stabilization and land trusts are how we ensure communities remain home to those who have lived in these areas for generations.

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

As the City Council Representative, it is my role to build and support a team to ensure we are responding to constituent needs while holding our city agencies accountable. Through the budget process, we must have our agencies working toward 21st century solutions. Too often we are waiting to respond to a crisis instead of planning for a more sustainable future for Baltimore, one that has healthing community for everyone. I will demand audits of city spending and direct funds to equitable projects across the entire District. We must stop raising the cost of living in Baltimore and demand for leadership of city services run efficient and effective departments. The recent revelation of DPW having a growing discretionary account when the residents of Baltimore have suffered from continuous rate increases is unacceptable. We must be able to better spend the resources available to the city while, when necessary, working with our partners in the state and federal government to assist with capital projects that benefit the region.

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

Our campaign launched in November of 2018 with the goal of reaching as many people as possible. We firmly believe that the systemic change we desire in Baltimore will not happen from the top down but rather in communities where people are working everyday to improve the conditions around them while trying to survive. We believe that we have to organize our communities back into the political process because we know that the power of the people is greater than the people in power.

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