

Our Revolution Baltimore City/County

Delegate and State Senate Endorsement Questionnaire

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Desired political office: [Delegate](#)

District Number: [40](#)

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I went completed my online membership form for the Maryland Chapter of Our Revolution. As soon as I find my debit card (seems to have disappeared), I can pay the 2022 membership dues (only remaining action).

1. How does your experience, along with your life experiences, qualify you for this position?

I am running for office to help make every resident in Baltimore safer, healthier and wealthier.

I'm the granddaughter of coal miners from West Virginia. And I'm the latch-key kid of a loving and hardworking single mom who always had at least two—sometimes three—jobs when I was growing up. I found refuge in books and church as a young girl. And I followed my faith and my books to a more secure and international life as a corporate lawyer.

But in 2005, I had emergency open heart surgery that changed my life. I determined then that if God blessed me to live, I would turn my volunteer work into a career so that I could help build up communities and uplift people in a more impactful way. I wanted to serve where I was from and in the places that helped me become who I am.

Since then, I've been blessed to do so much more than corporate law. I've been a public servant with a track record of results on the most pressing issues for vulnerable and working class folks—folks like my grandparents, my mom, my younger self and the foster children I used to serve. I have helped to create change in preK-12 education, police legitimacy, children and family services, and affordable housing.

Changemaker for Baltimore

Since 2016, I have served as CEO of American Communities Trust, Inc. ACT is a public charity dedicated to creating inclusive economic development that brings growth and prosperity to low-income residents. **Working with residents over four years—equal to a legislative term—I have:**

- Led development of the **Baltimore Pumphouse** (also known as the Baltimore Food Hub) helping to return traditional business and retail to a Baltimore neighborhood for the first time in more than 50 years.
- Assembled more than **\$13 million in grants and financing** in a crucial effort to **attract small businesses** to Baltimore City, **expand amenities** for Baltimore neighborhoods, and **build wealth for Baltimore families**.
- Led development of the pilot site for **Baltimore's Last Mile Park**. This is an eventual ecological and public art trail that will connect neighboring communities.
- Organized crucial partnerships and funding for producing a neighborhood-wide **Greenprint** – a plan for conserving green space and planning thoughtfully for demolition of excess housing.
- Spearheaded a resident-led coalition to develop a **comprehensive housing rehabilitation strategy**, with a goal to **keep at least 70% of current families** in the neighborhood.

Champion for Communities

I have a long history of advocacy with results for working-class communities. I founded and served as **President of the tenants' association**. In that role, I **fought for rent control and tenants' rights**. Through advocacy and leadership, I successfully prevented displacement and **preserved affordable housing** for 33 families, including seniors living on fixed incomes.

I have **fought for small businesses**, securing nearly \$1 million in grant opportunities and incentives for them. While a community representative, I fought for and won the complete redesign of a \$2 million street project that threatened to upend the character of a historic neighborhood. In one year, I held more than 25 community meetings and sent over 1000 emails to city officials.

Servant for the Voiceless

As a **volunteer lawyer for foster children** for five years, I fought to amplify the voices of young people who would have been lost in an overwhelmed system. As a **volunteer in a juvenile detention center**, I spent three years mentoring young girls awaiting arraignment for prostitution, assault, or selling drugs.

I have been an **activist leader on issues of police reform and legitimacy**, securing and producing the first national interview with former Chicago Police Chief Garry McCarthy following the tragic shooting of Laquan MacDonald. With partners I recruited, I developed and ran an education series designed to sensitize future political leaders and police officers on the impact of law enforcement activities in black and brown neighborhoods.

I also served as the **General Counsel to the DC Council’s Committee on Human Services**. There, I drafted and advanced numerous legislation, including ensuring social services support for families whose children were not showing up at elementary school. This legislation was a key strategy in **reducing chronic absenteeism** among young children.

Woman Who Has Lived to Share

Through the **American Heart Association**, I’ve spoken to thousands of women about the importance of self-care. I share my story of having emergency open heart surgery and living to share what I’ve learned.

I graduated from **Oxon Hill High School** in Prince George’s County, Maryland. I graduated from The Johns Hopkins University with my Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and from the University of Minnesota Law School *magna cum laude* with my Juris Doctor. I’m a member of the bars of Maryland and the District of Columbia (and formerly Minnesota).

I have a Master in Public Administration from the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government. I’m published through Harvard’s Joint Center on Housing Studies on the topic of supportive housing for the homeless.

Above All, a Friend, Wife, and Mom

I love being married to my economics and politics journalist, who pre-COVID-19 took the train to DC each day from our home in **Bolton Hill**. He’s also a longtime union man, now in the NewsGuild. Together, we have an exquisite five-year old daughter, proudly born in Baltimore at The Johns Hopkins University Hospital.

2. What will be the principles or values that guide your public service?

On Service:

- 1) Every voice matters.
- 2) Every life is valuable.
- 3) People born to ordinary circumstances should have extraordinary chances to live their dreams.
- 4) We have to give the people what they want. (O’Jays)

On Serving:

- 1) Patience improves the policy.
- 2) Be quick and clear when the answer is no.
- 3) Think and say it: true, honest, just, pure, lovely, good report, virtue and praise.
- 4) Great things will happen when people come together with a great desire to find solutions.

3. Do you identify as a progressive candidate? If so, what specifically makes you a progressive candidate for this political office?

At a national level, I am progressive. I voted for Bernie in the primary and Hillary in the general. I've supported in small dollar amounts national champions in the Progressive movement.

In Baltimore, I've found that the label progressive doesn't mean locally all that it can or should. I believe it would mean more if we had more folks in our political class who understood Baltimore's economics and how to make those economics work for every resident. That's why I'm running.

Climate Change/Green New Deal

4. Do you acknowledge the existence of climate change and the sense of urgency to address this issue on state and local levels?

Yes. And I believe keeping ahead of climate change is a critical inflection point in human history. In other words, I believe the world's next superpowers may be determined in great part by who gets climate change right and how early.

5. What is your position regarding a Green New Deal at the state level?

I believe net zero emissions (and ultimately net zero energy) are the future of affordability and wealth-building for everyday citizens.

I'm glad the Senate passed the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022. It does not go nearly as far as it should. So we must build on it with urgency, if it can become law.

While much of green technology still sells at a premium, we must help make the journey toward net zero emissions (and ultimately net zero energy) affordable for it to benefit working-class communities.

In many Black working-class communities, in particular, property values are one-quarter of the total cost of development. This means that the remaining 75% of development costs must be supported with subsidy and grant dollars, as conventional debt is often not an option.

In these Black working-class communities, it takes eight to ten years on average to assemble the financing for high-impact, large scale development strategies that bring economic and environmental fairness to residents.

Unfunded mandates could work counter productively to freeze Black working-

class communities in a hazardous state of underdevelopment with unhealthy environmental conditions that continue to rob lives. I support financial assistance to meet mandates until the upfront capital costs of green technology are lower.

If we cannot get everything at once, we must still push the green new deal and seek to build on what we're able to get. Normalizing going green is too important to delay.

In addition to ensuring financial assistance for meeting reduction mandates in working class communities, there are opportunities to mitigate conflict between the goals of historic preservation (in Baltimore, in particular) and reducing greenhouse emissions.

Many Black working-class communities rely on state and federal historic tax credits to complete between 20% and 40% of their capital stacks for development. Yet, reducing greenhouse gas emissions while preserving historic properties is woefully complicated, unclear, and, as a result, can be very expensive.

As such, many developers feel forced to view their options as historic vs. anything else. Because there are so few sources to help complete capital stacks in Black working-class communities, every funding source is indispensable. This means climate action and historic preservation must work better together for the benefit of those whom climate change most affects.

A robust, guaranteed (i.e. not competitive) incentive program that helps pay the cost of meeting those mandates (until the technology is cheaper) must go hand-in-hand with expanding mandates that affect Black working-class communities (e.g. something akin to state residential historic tax credit, but for climate change). Additionally, potential conflicts between such mandates and historic preservation should be favorably addressed at the outset.

6. In the previous legislative session, House Bill 33, known as the Climate Crisis and Education Act, was not passed. If this bill or a similar bill is introduced in the next legislative session, what is your position?

I would support House Bill 33, which I understand places a price should be placed on carbon, **provided that** changes are made to the tax code to ensure the carbon tax is not regressive. The least capital-rich Maryland residents are most likely to be the heaviest users of carbon. The price on carbon must be implemented so as to avoid penalizing those who lack the disposable income to choose differently.

7. What is your position regarding the electrification of renovated buildings as well as newly constructed buildings in Maryland?

I support expanding the mandates to electrify renovated buildings and newly constructed buildings. As noted above, there should also be an established fund that pays the premium

associated with meeting these mandates in working-class communities, if the technology's capital costs (such as with solar) are at premium dollar.

Conflict between historic requirements and climate solutions should be resolved proactively at the legislative level so that historic projects to embrace being green.

8. How would you vote on the Climate Solutions Act?

I would vote yes on Climate Solutions, notwithstanding attempts to weaken it. I would also push for more opportunities for coordination between historic requirements and climate solutions. And I would push for a non-competitive Climate Solutions Tax Credit (as discussed above).

9. How would you vote on the Environment Human Rights Amendment?

I would vote yes.

Health Care

10. What is your position regarding a single-payer system (such as Medicare for All) at the state level?

Personally, I am open to a single-payer system. I believe 2021 AP VoteCast poll has conclusively showed that, in a post-COVID environment, many Americans have shifted to become more favorable to a public option than they have ever been.

That being said, we should not lose time in ensuring that every Marylander is insured.

For Maryland, I support building on the Affordable Care Act, expanding government insurance options, and improving drug coverage. I am for automatic enrollment in health insurance. And I want Maryland to expand insurance coverage for undocumented immigrants.

When people are healthy, economies grow. Pure and simple. Small businesses can better manage health insurance costs, sharing more profits with workers. Families are less stressed and can spend money on other needs. And people can live longer, happier lives.

With the only all-payer system in the nation and an uninsured rate that is shy of 7%, Maryland is almost there. We can do better for everyone and our economy if we go all the way.

I know what it is like to suddenly need expensive surgery. I was lucky enough to have good insurance when I discovered I needed emergency open heart surgery in 2005. And I hear you at the doors today that affording health care is a big worry for so many. Folks are worried about how to pay \$400 for a single dosage of medicine.

Vital doses of medicine should not cost the same as a monthly car payment. And access to quality health care should never depend on where one lives, how much money one has, or one's race, gender or age. We can build on Maryland's incredibly unique structure. Doing so will save Marylander's money and provide crucial support to our small businesses that are grappling with rapidly rising benefits costs.

11. Would you vote for paid sick leave?

Yes, absolutely. I support the Time to Care Act. And I believe the State should continue to look for ways to support small businesses with the cost.

Police Reform

12. Johns Hopkins University (JHU) is moving forward with establishing a private university-based police department. What is your position regarding the establishment of a private university-based police department at JHU?

I do not support private organizations having public police power.

13. What proposed legislation or action will you take to address police reform on a state and local level?

Law enforcement must be by consent, not by force. I believe that law enforcement activities must be thoughtfully rebuilt from the ground up. In the United States, and in Baltimore particularly, policing has been by force. In many black and brown communities, it has also been by military force.

I am very supportive of our men and women in blue who fight for our city, sometimes thanklessly, each day. In Baltimore, I worked hand in hand with residents to establish the first volunteer comfort stop for police officers.

It has been a tremendous success for strengthening police and resident relationships in a neighborhood with high rates of violent crime. It has also tremendously boosted officer morale. A mentally healthy officer is a safer officer for everyone. In this community, neighbors want their officers to work with them and that is happening better and more.

Because of this relationship and similar efforts to bring together police, neighbors and activists, I have great hope that with more thoughtfulness we can get law enforcement right and all the complicated relationships that come with it.

Sir Robert Peel, the architect of modern day policing outside of the United States, stated in his nine principles of law enforcement (1829):

“The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police existence, actions, behavior and the ability of the police to secure and maintain public respect ... the police at all times should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police.”

Sir Robert Peel

Nonviolence must be our foundation...on the streets and among the police.

While Sir Robert Peel’s father of the same name tragically made his wealth in the slave trade, his son set forth crucial principles for non-violence in law enforcement. I believe that reimagining and recreating what law enforcement activities are and how they should function begins with non-violence:

1. To prevent crime and disorder, as an alternative to their repression by military force and severity of legal punishment.
2. To recognize always that the power of the police to fulfill their functions and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behavior, and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect.
3. To recognize always that to secure and maintain the respect and approval of the public means also the securing of the willing cooperation of the public in the task of securing observance of laws.
4. To recognize always that the extent to which the cooperation of the public can be secured diminishes proportionately the necessity of the use of physical force and compulsion for achieving police objectives.
5. To seek and preserve public favor, not by pandering to public opinion, but by constantly demonstrating absolute impartial service to law, in complete independence of policy, and without regard to the justice or injustice of the substance of individual laws, by ready offering of individual service and friendship to all members of the public without regard to their wealth or social standing, by ready exercise of courtesy and friendly good humor, and by ready offering of individual sacrifice in protecting and preserving life.
6. To use physical force only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient to obtain public cooperation to an extent necessary to secure observance of law or to restore order, and to use only the minimum degree of physical force which is necessary on any particular occasion for achieving a police objective.
7. **To maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police**, the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties

which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.

8. To recognize always the need for strict adherence to police-executive functions, and to refrain from even seeming to usurp the powers of the judiciary of avenging individuals or the State, and of authoritatively judging guilt and punishing the guilty.
9. To recognize always that the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, and not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with them.

It's time to thoughtfully rebuild from the ground up.

The State of Maryland must redefine police power according to the foundational principles of nonviolence. I support a thoughtful re-examination at the state level of how police unions are permitted to function, what law enforcement means and how it should happen within communities – particularly for communities that have been over-policed and under-policed.

The Commissioner is Coach.

In Baltimore City, we need less frequent change of the Police Commissioner. We've had five police commissioners in five years—only one of whom were promoted from within the department. Treating the office of Commissioner as disposable conveys to rank and file officers that the Commissioner is merely a ceremonial figure—that the rank and file can count only on themselves for steady leadership.

But I believe the Commissioner is Coach. And we need to look within the department first for whom that Coach could be. If we don't trust the training our officers are getting, then we need to fund improving it, so that we can find the right leaders from within the department. It matters for morale. And morale matters for the services our residents receive.

The action items I propose below “react” to the current functioning of law enforcement activity. But rebuilding law enforcement activities around principles of nonviolence would hopefully render many of the action items below unnecessary. Thoughtful rebuilds require time, however. So, while we advance the rebuild, the below measures should be in place.

Action Items:

- **Action Item #1:** Be intentional about boosting morale among stewards of public safety. The reality is that law enforcement is a hard job. It is a necessary job. Until we figure out what the future should look like, we need to listen to each other's pain and help one another heal from trauma so that violence does not beget violence. Like any human being, stewards of public safety need regular therapy for exposure to violence.
- **Action Item #2:** An independent citizen review board should have original jurisdiction over citizen complaints. Complaints should be investigated by investigators who are not

sworn officers. The review board should not be intentionally weighted toward sworn officers, as is the current Hearing Board.

- **Action Item #3:** Hearing on matters of discipline should not occur until after the head of law enforcement has imposed discipline.
- **Action Item #4:** Peer officers should not be members of the Hearing Board.
- **Action Item #5:** Disallow expungement of records relating to alleged misconduct. The allegations must be part of the data set that is used in the Early Intervention System.
- **Action Item #6:** Abolish the “Do not call” list and make it a policy to terminate officers who have committed acts that bear on credibility, integrity, and honesty.
- **Action Item #7:** Make all disciplinary actions public.
- **Action Item #8:** Make public and post on the Baltimore City Police Department’s website all policy manuals and procedures.

14. Would you vote to end debtor prisoners?

Yes, without question.

Drug Policy Reform/Legalization of Marijuana

15. What is your position regarding the decriminalization of marijuana possession and use in Maryland?

I support decriminalization of marijuana possession.

16. What is your position regarding the legalization of marijuana for recreational use in Maryland?

I support the legalization of marijuana possession for recreational purposes. As with cigarette smoke, I also believe that nonsmokers have freedom not to be around weed smoke, which can lead to contact highs. As the mom of a five year old, I believe in ensuring responsible usage that doesn’t create a nuisance for others.

17. What is your position regarding the decriminalization of psilocybin and legalization for therapeutic use in Maryland?

I support the decriminalization of psilocybin and legalization for therapeutic use in Maryland. My position is largely aligned with <https://psychedelicmedicinecoalition.org/>, as of March 22, 2022.

Immigrant Rights

18. In the previous legislative session, House Bill 0016, known as the Dignity Not Detention Act, was vetoed by Gov. Hogan. If this bill is reintroduced in the upcoming legislative session, what is your position?

I support Dignity Not Detention.

Additionally, I support the Maryland Trust ACT, Universal Representation, and Protecting the Privacy of Maryland Drivers.

19. According to the 2010 US Census, Asian-Americans make up 6.1% of Maryland's population. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in hate crimes nationwide and locally against Asian-Americans. What proposed legislation and action will you take to protect these individuals on a state and local level?

I support the executive action taken in response to the increase in hate crimes against Asians. Because of Governor Hogan's personal connection to this issue, his efforts to support this community seemed robust. I would continue this course, ensuring that Asian-American don't suffer a double-prejudice as a result of some viewing Asian-Americans as a "model minority".

I look forward to learning from Our Revolution what additional measures are important to ensure safety, security, and dignity for every culture and community, particularly Asian-Americans.

20. In recent months, Maryland has become a 'welcome state' in supporting the transition of refugees arriving from Afghanistan. What proposed legislation and action will you take in meeting the immediate needs of Afghan refugees on a state and local level?

Afghans need refugee status that entitle them to public assistance and other benefits, such as in-state tuition. This must be done legislatively. Some need skills training, as well, which may require a special appropriation.

We also need a better system generally for immigrants and refugees who are professionally licensed in their home country to have an affordable and family friendly path for re-licensure here in Maryland. This of course depends on the license, but being a 'welcome state' should also mean helping refugees recover their former livelihoods.

Public Transit

21. In 2018, Gov. Hogan canceled the Red Line. Being that Maryland will have a new governor in 2022, there may be an effort to revive legislation for the Red Line. What is your position regarding the Red Line as a viable transit project in Baltimore?

We must absolutely build the redline. I would go a step further to plan for expansive rapid transit throughout Baltimore City.

22. In a 2021 study conducted by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition, it showed racial disparities in Baltimore's transit system. What proposed legislation and specific action will you take to address this issue?

Affordable and convenient transit is crucial for the long-term vitality of any economy. In and around Baltimore, we face mammoth transit challenges that require truly visionary and collaborative thinking to solve.

To solve racial disparities, we simply need to build an expansive rapid transit system that reaches *everywhere*, as it does in New York and in DC. And we need to respect, not condemn, Black communities while working to reach every community with rapid transit.

Regional Transit Authority

I support re-establishing a regional transit authority to ensure local input into regional transit decision-making.

Enhanced pedestrian access Druid Park

Baltimore's public treasures, such as Druid Hill Park and Jones Falls, are encircled or covered by busy freeways that threaten pedestrians, discourage outdoor recreation, and threaten public safety. We also have changing values and behaviors around what cars we purchase and how much we drive. And, as we age, our mobility changes too.

The pathways to Druid Park have been neglected and falling into disrepair for years. We must honor community voices. I support sincerely and authentically delivering first on the changes that residents have been demanding for years. This includes repaired sidewalks, trash receptacles, consistent clean-up, and beautiful landscaping. And I fully support multi-modal pathways that would encourage exercise, allow for safer access, and bolster Druid Hill Park as a regional treasure.

We must make Baltimore's iconic Druid Park safe for pedestrians and connect it to the harbor and to Clifton Park. Simultaneously, we should be identifying and immediately enhancing appropriate routes for quick east-west access across the city, ensuring a vital route for West Baltimore residents to access all parts of our incredible city.

Expanded and improved underground tunnels

We also need to maintain the Marc train and improve the underground tunnels that both Marc and Amtrak use.

It is crucial that we sacrifice to preserve our historic neighborhoods while we repair and upgrade underground train tunnels. The choice is by no means a zero-sum game. We must preserve our neighborhoods and protect homes, while expanding the tunnels.

Maglev

If the Maglev project were to revive, I support bringing the Maglev all the way into Baltimore City, provided that it can be done in a manner that does not disrupt Black working-class communities. The Maglev will not do what is hoped for or needed for the Northeastern corridor or for Baltimore City if it touches only the perimeter and if, on a permanent basis, many trains bypass the stop altogether.

The Maglev should come into the heart of the city so that it can be more accessible and life-changing for all. The price of Maglev monthly passes should be capped at a percentage of household income to ensure affordability for the working class. The proposed \$70 Maglev ticket matched the cost of a ride-share between Baltimore and DC. Under that scenario, the economics did not yet work. When the economics work for the working class, the Maglev will work for all.

As a delegate, my value would be that for transit to work, it must work for the working class and for older adults.

Housing

23. In August 2021, Maryland's moratorium on residential eviction expired. What proposed legislation or action will you take to address the issues related to tenants who have fallen behind in paying rent?

We need a long-term permanent solution. In Baltimore, in particular, tenants still do not have incomes high enough to afford housing that is affordable by national measures.

To help tenants who have fallen behind in rent, I would:

- **Action Item #1:** Simplify and expand EITC (again). The expanded child tax credit has shown us the future for reducing child poverty and improving outcomes for Maryland citizens.

With the loss of that federal expanded child tax credit, Maryland should and must step in to fill the gaps where it can. Maryland's EITC benefit should match fully the federal EITC benefit and it should be paid out monthly. I also support expanding Maryland's child tax benefit and paying that out monthly too.

The monthly payments are key. Research and our 2021 experience show that anyone receiving this benefit will have better health, higher lifetime earnings, and better high school graduation and college attendance rates. I would not be surprised if recipients also showed greater housing stability. Even babies are shown to have better brain development. Maryland is richer when its people are, making this policy a no-brainer. And we can afford it.

- 1) Expand and simplify the Earned Income Tax Credit so that it is one fully refundable credit up to 100% of the federal credit (similar to DC).
 - 2) Pay out the Earned Income Tax Credit monthly and in advance, similar to the Biden's federal Child Tax Credit.
- **Action Item #2:** The state increased the minimum wage to \$15.00 over a six-year period, but the annual rate still needs to be pegged to inflation. Otherwise, we haven't made meaningful progress for Marylanders who work hard.

There is also a strong argument for increasing minimum wage beyond \$15.00 per hour. In the interim, this can at least be done for state workers, which would create wage pressure elsewhere.

- **Action Item #3:** Champion creating a competitive economy in Baltimore City. This includes being a strong advocate for slashing real and personal property taxes in Baltimore. Doing so would help make home ownership achievable and sustainable for some families who have faced eviction in the past. It would help to recruit more business to Baltimore City. And it would establish a competitive economy where people who work hard can get ahead.

Consumer Rights

24. How would you vote on auto insurance prices not being tied to zip codes?

Zip codes are often a proxy for race, so I would support prices not being tied to zip codes. Other race-neutral identifiers can also be a proxy for race, however. I'm eager to learn what else we can do to more permanently solve the underlying challenge.