

Our Revolution Baltimore City/County

Delegate and State Senate Endorsement Questionnaire

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

As a licensed attorney, my expertise on immigration, criminal justice reform, and police accountability is steeped in her practice of the law. I practiced as an immigration attorney advisor with the United States Department of Justice Honors Program. Subsequently, I served as a Senior Policy Research Analyst for the Job Opportunities Task Force advocating for Maryland policy reform to include: the decriminalization of poverty and race; strengthening of the workforce; and increasing of employment opportunities for low-wage workers.

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

There are three basic values that guide my view of public service (1) community empowerment; (2) resistance; and (3) integrity.

First, all too often, there is an oligarchic narrative of leadership that power is top down in nature, creating change and then letting it trickle down to the bottom. This narrative often leaves those at the bottom fighting for scraps of equity as the more privileged individuals. Utilitarianism is dead. As Huey P.

Newton suggested, power is derived from people and the community. Specifically, public service should require an individual's understanding of the communities needs and the desire to uplift the voices of those that are often marginalized or do not have access to traditional political power.

Secondly, every United States institution was developed through the shedding of native blood and the transformation of black bodies into flesh. As such, all American institutions are built on the foundational principles of gratuitous violence and brutal – to include modern political institutions. As such, I believe that true service and progress requires an understanding that current American political institutions require inequity and structural violence. As a vanguard, I believe that resistance is necessary and important. WE have

Finally, I believe that within public service that above everything – an elected official should be morally sound and do what is right. I am not a realist, I believe above all aspects of socio-political life that individuals that are elected into office should do their very best to be good and honest people – people that have a genuine interest in protecting the interest of their communities and the people they serve.

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

As a candidate, I identify as progressive – largely because I believe that despite social positioning, that every single person should be treated equitably. I think left leaning democrats believe that equality is the key to a more fair society – but the reality is, often fairness is not the solution to years of historical violence. I believe what makes me a progressive candidate is my understanding that social identity dictates the amount of recuperation required. It is completely oxymoronic for the poor to receive the exact same care as the rich – the social determinants of health and quality of life are completely different.

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?

As a country built on capitalism and utilitarianism, climate change was an inevitable component of manifest destiny. I acknowledge the existence of climate change – it is real and anthropogenic. From fracking, which has left methane emissions at an all-time high, to the rising sea levels, it is urgent need to address the destruction of our ecosystem and develop solutions on state and local levels.

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

My position regarding a Green New Deal is simple – on a state level we need to move Maryland to 100% renewable energy as soon as possible. We need to expand public transit, plant trees, improve water and air quality, and mobilize to immediately address impending ecological collapse. The finite resources we have currently been using not only have an expiration date but come with a large price tag – it is time to take

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?

If introduced next legislative session, I would wholeheartedly support the Climate Crisis and Education Act. It is essential for our youth and communities to understand the importance of climate change and brainstorm solutions to these issues. This is not only essential to raise awareness about climate change and solutions but also to challenge the destructive utilitarian logic that has led to the destruction of our environment.

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

I support the electrification of renovated buildings and newly constructed buildings in Maryland. Recent studies by Environment Maryland demonstrate that electrifying Maryland's buildings could cut carbon emissions and transform our energy system – which would ultimately lead to a critical reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Studies further demonstrate that completely repowering Maryland's homes and businesses with electricity by 2050 is expected to result in emissions reductions equal to taking more than 1 million cars off the road. As such, I would be in full support.

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

I would vote for the Climate Solutions Act – especially given the nature of capitalism today. Big businesses should not get free access to pollution of our environment without any penalty. As such, the free-market solution is to charge companies for emissions – thereby creating deterrents to big corporation pollution. Additionally, I am in full support of requiring the state to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2030 and achieving net-zero statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.

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

I would vote in full support of the Environment Human Rights Amendment as it would empower Marylanders, local governments, and the state to protect and defend the fundamental right to live and exist in a healthy environment – and to ensure that this right is fully protected. It is a basic human dignity that every individual has a fundamental right to a healthy and sustainable environment.

Health Care

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

I believe that we should have a single-payer system. As a black woman epilepsy warrior – I believe that health outcomes should not be based on an arbitrary ability to pay. If elected I would build on the Affordable Care Act, expanding rights and benefits until we have true, universal coverage under Medicare for All. Whether that process takes one piece of legislation or several, we need to move toward a more just system where Marylanders can rely on their healthcare coverage. Ending premiums, co-pays, and deductibles to ensure complete coverage for all Marylanders is necessary.

11. Would you vote for paid sick leave?

Yes – I would vote for paid sick leave. In fact, during the 2021 General Assembly I not only testified in support of the strengthening of the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act to protect and expand worker’s rights during public health emergencies but also testified in opposition to the restriction and violation of workers’ right to paid sick leave through the requiring of medical verification.

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?

There should be no privatization of any police force – not only for Johns Hopkins University but for any business or company that seeks to mix state authority with financial interests of a business. It is not only unconstitutional but places a capitalist value on public safety. Further, this also incentivizes a criminalization of the poor – there should be no establishment of a private university-based police department.

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

If elected, I would support transparency and penalties for officers accused of misconduct. Further, as police take an oath to serve and protect, violations of this oath should result in criminal penalty. I believe in local oversight of police misconduct and civilian review boards and I would support legislation that mandate this in Maryland localities.

14. Would you vote to end debtor prisoners?

In 2021, I supported legislation that would eliminate debtor prisons and eliminate predatory fines and fees – that are established with the sole purpose of criminalizing the poor and creating barriers to economic mobility for vulnerable community members. Similar to the “Ferguson Effect” some cities have built their entire revenue system of taxing the poor – and then criminalizing community members when they do not have the inability to pay. This type of rhetoric should be eliminated – as such I would vote to end debtor prisons.

Drug Policy Reform/Legalization of Marijuana

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

I support the decriminalization of marijuana possession and use in Maryland.

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

I am in full support of the legalization of marijuana for recreational use in Marijuana. I believe that this legalization should also result in retroactive expungement of criminal records associated with the selling of marijuana. Moreover, with state regulation of marijuana sales, I believe there should be pathways to entrepreneurship for communities that were once criminalized and targeted for the sale of marijuana. With the legalization of marijuana, commercialization is inevitable – as such more big businesses will profit than communities that were once sustained by the selling of marijuana in the black market. This would then lead to a further wealth gap in communities of color. As such, I believe that local sellers should have access to pathways to entrepreneurship.

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

As both a person that suffers from seizures and the daughter of a retired army-veteran - I believe that given the healing and relief abilities of psilocybin - I support the decriminalization of its use for therapeutic use in Maryland. Studies have demonstrated the healing capabilities as alternative therapies - it is time for society to evolve by common myths associated by extreme-conservatism and move towards more inclusive approaches to treatments of disorders and diseases.

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?

As a former Attorney Advisor for the United States Department of Justice, Executive Office for Immigration Review, I would fully support the Dignity Not Detention Act because it is unethical to coerce, intimidate or threaten any individual based on their perceived or actual immigration status or that of a family member. Often times, the United States allows for immigration status to operate as a social-marking of second-class citizenship. This logic of otherization is not only xenophobic but discriminatory and should be banned from any type of law enforcement practice.

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?

As a black woman, whose ancestors are still suffering from vicious hate crimes motivated by ignorance and political propaganda, I absolutely empathize with the targeting of racial minorities. More particularly, with the notoriety of the coronavirus, the violence suffered by Asian-Americans has been extreme and disgusting. On a state level, I would strengthen protections for individuals by developing penalties for hate crimes - which would serve as significant deterrents to hate crimes.

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?

I support the transition of refugees arriving from Afghanistan and would support any legislation to accommodate refugees from any nation states – that is the purpose of the establishment of asylum in the United States. Further, as a legislator, I would not only introduce legislation to ensure that refugees have support during their credible fear interviews during the immigration process but I would also support and propose legislation that protects their right to legal representation during their immigration hearings. As a former immigration attorney, serving at the DOJ, many refugees were denied asylum because they did not have access to legal representation and did not understand the juridical process of the United States. If elected, I would support legislation that would create a right to legal representation in immigration proceedings – to further protect refugees.

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?

I support eco-friendly modes of transportation like the Red Line and I would support the Red Line as a viable transit project in Baltimore. We need to reimagine transit in a way that does not necessitate the carbon emissions and fosters the promotion of reliable, transit that reduces pollution and still maintains the social integrity of movement for residents. I believe that reinvesting in the Red Line would do just that – by not only positively impacting the health of all residents but strengthening the freedom of autonomous movement in the State of Maryland.

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?

Mobility, like almost every other socio-political issue, is absolutely tied to racial disparities. As most public health researchers would agree, race as a social determinant of health can have an impact on not only your quality of life but also your mobility and ability to have autonomy. As such, I would sponsor and support legislation that created equitable solution to structural racism that rears itself in areas of state governance such as transit. Solutions to this could look like state investment in transportation in lower income communities, expansion of railways and eco-friendly transportation.

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?

In regards to addressing tenants that have fallen behind in paying rent, I believe that the state should offer forgiveness programs. As a former student attorney for Howard Law's Fair Housing Clinic - I believe the protection of renter's rights should be a priority. Tenants should not be required to reimburse slumlords that do not even ensure inhabitability standards of the law. If elected, I would sponsor legislation that would (1) allot government assistance for tenants that have fallen behind on their rent; (2) extend the moratorium as we are still in the midst of a public health emergency; and (3) would eliminate back rent payments for landlords that do not abide by current Maryland housing law standards.

Consumer Rights

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

I would vote in support of auto insurance prices not being tied to zip codes. In 2021, I worked to support legislation that would make it unlawful for insurance companies in the state of Maryland to use non-driving factors to determine auto-insurance prices. This type of discrimination has been used as a tool of inequity to further criminalize the poor and completely creates