

Our Revolution Maryland 2022 Gubernatorial Questionnaire

Responses to Questions will be made Public

Governor Candidate Name *

Rushern Baker (Resubmission)

Lt. Governor Candidate Name

Nancy Navarro

Website *

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Do you support legalizing cannabis possession and use in Maryland? If yes, If yes, what steps do you support to provide redress to those individuals and communities that were targeted by police and prosecutors in past years when attempting to enforce laws against the use and non-violent distribution of marijuana? *

Yes, we are ardent supporters of legalizing cannabis, and doing so in a way that puts the communities hardest hit by the "War on Drugs" at the forefront of policy making. Our campaign will be releasing a thorough cannabis legalization platform that I look forward to sharing with you once it is public.

Regarding the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 on Police Discipline and Law Enforcement Programs and Procedure - What is your perspective on the final legislation which came out of last year's session? Does it represent real reform and create accountability and transparency? Are you satisfied with the progress at the state level and county efforts counties to respond to and implement the changes directed by the new law? What, if, any changes would you push for as Governor to strengthen the provisions enacted last year? *

We support the bills passed during last year's session, and believe that they are necessary steps towards reforming the State's criminal justice system. However, there is always more progress to be made, particularly when it comes to police accountability. One change our administration would make would be to further democratize the charging committees tasked with holding police accountable for their actions. Right now, committee members are appointed and hold their positions for 3 years. We believe that these longer terms should be reigned in, with members serving for a short time. This way, the process will be more transparent, and less vulnerable to corruption and political pressure.

Currently courts are operating under a broad directive from the Court of Appeals to consider various options before imposing cash bail. But there is no legislation due to a concerted pressure campaign by the bail bond lobby. Would you prioritize a law limiting or eliminating cash bail for (most) non-violent offenses (with exceptions for clear flight risks)? *

Yes, we would support limiting or possibly eliminating cash bail.

Will you support public financing for all statewide offices and for the state legislature to enable everyday citizens to run for office? *

Yes, as the only candidates in the Governor's race currently utilizing public financing, and with Councilmember Navarro being the only candidate in the race to have used it before, the issue of the democratization of our campaign finance system is a top priority for us once in office. The legislation to expand public financing to all elected offices in the state will be introduced in the first session of our administration.

Will you support legislation that will enable all county-level offices to be eligible for public financing? *

Yes, as stated above, this will be one of the first priorities of our administration.

Will you support a constitutional amendment to ban appointments and fill vacancies in the General Assembly by special elections as 25 states in the U.S. currently do? *

Yes, as part of our democratization efforts, we need to ensure transparency and limit the influence of political insiders by replacing appointments with special elections.

Will you advocate on behalf of an effort to establish a statewide office for Public Advocate (and a public fund for candidates)? *

Yes, we support this as well.

The last round of state elections raised examples pointing to the insular nature of our judicial elections and the slates which dominate the voting. Would you initiate an effort to reconsider the process for appointing and electing judges in Maryland? *

Yes, our judicial system should undergo the same democratic reforms that we are proposing for the rest of our government.

Do you support Medicare for All at the federal level? *

Yes, we also support State efforts to expand medicaid coverage while we continue to advocate for this necessary federal reform.

Do you support single-payer health care in Maryland? If elected, will you commit to ask for a legislative study or create an executive agency study of the feasibility of implementing single-payer health coverage in Maryland? *

Yes, we would commission an executive study to ensure that a single-payer option is given due consideration during our administration. We believe that as it stands, our healthcare system is in need of drastic reform. Too many Marylanders are being left out to dry as the profit incentives of insurers and manufacturers are getting in the way of necessary care. Additionally, we would work to ensure that any plan to advance our healthcare system would prioritize the coverage of mental, as well as physical health.

Connecticut has shown that when a state administers Medicaid, administrative costs are slashed. Will you commit to request a federal CMS waiver to remove MCOs from our Medicaid program and have the State administer the program? *

Yes, we believe the State is in the best position to administer Medicaid to ensure that our most vulnerable populations are receiving appropriate care and fair costs to both the patient and the State.

Will you support corrective legislation to include all workers, including tipped and agricultural workers, in our state's minimum wage law? Do you support HB8 Maryland Family and Medical Leave Insurance program, or an alternative to provide paid parental or medical leave for Maryland workers? *

Yes, we believe that the holes in our current minimum wage law have only served to invite attempts to further weaken its worker protections. Closing these gaps will be a priority of our administration, as will paid family leave, should the current bill fail to pass this session.

Do you support workers' rights to organize in the private and public sectors? Will you make it a priority that all public employees be covered by a public employees relations act, similar to the National Labor Relations Act, which has governed work in the private sector for over 80 years? *

One of my primary goals as Governor will be to help more Marylanders take control of their financial future. Building the strength of unions and bringing more workers to the bargaining table is central to that goal. We believe that the State should set an example for the private sector by protecting its own workers through unionization, and will prioritize legislation to that end.

How will you address continuing inequities in school infrastructure and help redress persistent problems like undrinkable water, classrooms without climate control, and mold? *

We support the Blueprint's efforts to eliminate such inequities, and will fight to ensure every promised dollar goes toward keeping our public schools up to date and safe for our children and educators. This is important not just for the students' studies and our educators' abilities to do their work well.

Education stalwart Dr. Alvin Thornton has said that racism prevented the construction of schools in Prince George's County for 20 years. In order to address the backlog in school construction, the State legislature sanctioned a Public Private Partnership (P3) program for Prince George's - the first P3 program for school construction in the entire nation. Do you think a P3 program is an appropriate way to respond to racism in the county and the state? *

No, the State has never really stepped up in a real way to fully fund school construction and capital projects, especially in predominantly Black and Brown jurisdictions. P3s were an innovative way for Prince George's County residents to get the new schools they desperately needed on a much quicker timeline, however it's not a sustainable solution to this problem. Under a Baker/Navarro administration, we would actually put forth the resources local jurisdictions need for school construction and capital projects rather than short changing the communities who need it most.

What will you do to create a more progressive tax structure in Maryland? *

We believe Maryland's tax system should benefit the vast majority of Marylanders. This means our primary consideration should be the working and middle class families who keep our economy running. A strong, progressive tax is essential for a modern economy like ours, besides simply being the right and fair thing to do. That said, we must remain competitive, and ensure employers are incentivized to come to the state. In my time as County Executive, I learned first-hand that investing in a government that actually works for people and investing in our education system are the very things that businesses relocate to our state for. Those who say we cannot attract business without lowering taxes on the wealthy are categorically false, and I hope to add our state to the long list of examples of how a modern tax system can do both.

What can the State do to accelerate the construction of affordable and inexpensive housing as we seek to create walkable diverse communities in response to the pressing concerns of climate change? *

Affordable housing is one of the greatest issues in our region, especially in the DC region but Baltimore has seen soaring rent prices as well since the start of the pandemic. There are many different approaches we need to take to address this problem, including dedicating additional resources to affordable green housing construction. There are also steps we can take to create fairer banking and appraisal practices for homes, which still unfairly discriminate against Black and Brown families. We recently participated in a forum with the organization Black Homes Matter to advocate for this very issue. Access to affordable public transit is another important issue related to both housing affordability and climate change, which will be a top priority for our administration as we finally finish the Purple Line and revive the Red Line project in Baltimore.

How will you improve public transportation in the state? What can the state do to promote or support efforts to develop low-cost or free public transit alternatives? Will you rebalance the transportation budget away from car dependence with highway construction to more public transportation all across Maryland? Why or Why not? *

With the passage of the infrastructure Investment and Jobs act, the State is set to receive significant funding for our transportation infrastructure. This wave of federal funds is a tremendous opportunity to invest in the future of the State. This means not only expanding public transportation, but investing in local organizations that can further distribute the money in a way that best suits their individual communities. Our administration will direct the bulk of the funds to the creation of the Red Line in Baltimore and subsequent investment in Baltimore Metro transit. If we can create cheap, easy access around the city, it will create an economic boom that will reverberate across the State.

Governor Hogan has proposed rebuilding the American Legion Bridge, widening connecting highways, constructed and managed by a public-private partnership will derive revenue from added variably-priced lanes that will serve only a fraction of drivers, primarily those who can afford the high tolls we can expect. What is your stance on the Hogan proposal? If elected will you use your position on top of Maryland's administrative agencies to revisit the Hogan plan? *

While we certainly face a traffic problem in our outdated connections to Virginia, expanding highways and variable-priced lanes are not the solution. This kind of backwards thinking is exactly what we hope to eliminate from our executive branch. While this area is not our first transportation priority, when looking at any solution, equity and sustainability will be our first considerations.

Do you support or oppose the proposed Maglev project for the DC-Baltimore corridor? Why?

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No, we do not support the proposed Maglev project. Its construction would displace many families from their homes and working people would not even be able to afford the tickets to ride the trains. It's simply a money grab for wealthy developers who are seeking to line their own pockets. A much-better use of our funding and time would be expanding the MARC train, finishing the Purple Line and reviving the Red Line.

Will you commit to funding MARC expansion to make it a 2-way commuter rail system? *

Yes, expanding MARC will be one piece of our transportation plan to reduce emission and great more equitable transportation infrastructure for Marylanders.

Do you support the removal of trash incineration and other dirty technologies from Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (HB11)? Why will you do in your four years to scale up the amount of clean renewable energy being used by Marylanders? *

Yes, I do support HB 11. We have an extensive plan for creating a greener, healthier Maryland during our administration. Part of that plan will be to rework the State's environmental goals to be even bolder and more forward-thinking. This means divesting from fossil fuels, increasing support for wind and solar energy, and reducing consumption through higher standards for new building construction.

Do you agree with the goals of the Green New Deal Resolution in Congress? What will you do to advance each or any of the goals listed in the resolution, for example energy efficiency in existing and new buildings, sustainable land use and reduce agricultural pollution and emissions, reducing waste and disposal of hazardous materials, and protecting fragile ecosystems, all while still creating a fair and just transition for all communities and workers? *

We support all of the goals of the Green New Deal Resolution, and our administration supports an environmental policy platform aimed at tackling each of them. At the top of our priority list though is ensuring that any goal or policy set by the state puts environmental justice first. Too often, the conversation around environmentalism and pollution reduction has left out, or even been at the expense of marginalized communities. This means that as we have become a more environmentally conscious society, we have put the burden of what pollution remains on those who can least afford it. For this reason, the first conversation in every policy proposal we are putting forward will be about whether those communities have a voice in the matter. By including community leaders, as well as policy professionals and environmental experts in the conversation, we can ensure that the outcomes are both effective and just.

While corporations make huge profits through industrialized agriculture on the Eastern Shore, families face bankruptcy via the franchise model, and taxpayers are left holding the impossible task of cleaning the Bay. How would you address these interrelated issues in a way that creates a fair livelihood for farmers and addressing pollution on the land in the Bay? *

As with many of our economic sectors, agricultural giants have been pushing small farmers out of business for too long. As County Executive, I worked to help local businesses thrive against the tide of large corporations and will do the same as Governor. The Eastern Shore is a unique case with nuances beyond our expertise. That is why our administration will rely on community leaders, local environmental advocates, and the voices of the family farmers themselves for guidance on how to best address this issue.

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